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Contemporary writers

Kipling - poet, novelist

Alfred Noyes poet

H.G. Wells novelist

Drinkwater dramatist

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CENTURY READINGS
FOR A COURSE IN
ENGLISH LITERATURE

EDITED AND ANNOTATED BY

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VOLUME II

How long were these
Lear themes supposed to

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CONTENTS

PAGE

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850) 503
Preface to Lyrical Ballads 504
The Prelude, Book I 516
Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey 518
Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known 520
She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways 520
I Traveled among Unknown Men 520
Three Years She Grew in Sun and Shower 520
A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal 521
Michael 521
My Heart Leaps Up When I Behold 527
The Sparrow's Nest 527
To the Cuckoo 527
Resolution and Independence 528
To a Young Lady 530
The Solitary Reaper 530
Yarrow Unvisited 530
She Was a Phantom of Delight 531
I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud 531
To a Skylark 531
Elegiac Stanzas 532
Ode to Duty 533
Character of the Happy Warrior 533
Ode, Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood 534
Sonnets: Nuns Fret Not 537
Personal Talk 537
Composed upon Westminster Bridge 538
Composed by the Seaside Near Calais 538
It Is a Beauteous Evening 538
On the Extinction of the Venetian Republic 538
To Toussaint L'Ouverture 538
September, 1802, Near Dover 539
London, 1802 539
It Is Not To Be Thought Of 539
When I Have Borne in Memory 539
To the Men of Kent 539
Thought of a Briton on the Subjugation of Switzerland 540
The World is Too Much with Us 540
Afterthought to the River Duddon 540
Inside of King's College Chapel, Cambridge 540
Continued 541
On the Departure of Sir Walter Scott 541
'There' Said a Stripling 541
Conclusion 541

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772–1834) 542
Biographia Literaria 543
The Rime of the Ancient Mariner 553
Christabel 560
Kubla Khan 565
Frost at Midnight 565
Humility The Mother of Charity 566
Epitaph 566

CHARLES LAMB (1775–1834) 567
The Old Familiar Faces 567
Mackery End in Hertfordshire 568
Dream-Children: A Reverie 570

PAGE

A Chapter on Ears . . . 572
A Dissertation upon Roast Pig . . . 574

SIR WALTER SCOTT (1771–1832) . . . 579
Marmion, Canto VI . . . 579
Soldier, Rest! . . . 585

GEORGE NOEL GORDON, LORD BYRON (1788–1824) . . . 586
Sonnet on Chillon . . . 586
Childe Harold, Canto III . . . 587
Childe Harold, Canto IV . . . 593
The Vision of Judgment . . . 600
Don Juan, Canto III . . . 605
Don Juan, Canto IV . . . 608

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792–1822) . . . 614
Hymn to Intellectual Beauty . . . 615
Ozymandias . . . 616
Stanzas Written in Dejection, Near Naples . . . 616
Prometheus Unbound, Act IV . . . 616
Ode to the West Wind . . . 625
The Indian Serenade . . . 626
The Cloud . . . 626
To a Skylark . . . 627
A Lament . . . 628
To — ('Music, when soft voices die,') . . . 629
Adonais . . . 629
Final Chorus from Hellas . . . 636
To Night . . . 637
To — ('One word is too often profaned') . . . 637
With a Guitar, to Jane . . . 637
Lines: When the Lamp is Shattered . . . 638
A Dirge . . . 638

JOHN KEATS (1795–1821) . . . 639
Keen, Fitful Gusts Are Whispering Here and There . . . 639
On First Looking into Chapman's Homer . . . 639
Endymion, Book I, Proem . . . 640
The Eve of St. Agnes . . . 640
Ode ('Bards of Passion and of Mirth') . . . 645
Robin Hood . . . 646
Lines on the Mermaid Tavern . . . 646
Ode on a Grecian Urn . . . 647
Ode to a Nightingale . . . 647
Ode on Melancholy . . . 648
To Autumn . . . 649
Hyperion, Book I . . . 649
In a Drear-Nighted December . . . 654
La Belle Dame Sans Merci . . . 654
On Seeing the Elgin Marbles . . . 655
On the Sea . . . 655
When I Have Fears That I May Cease To Be . . . 655
Bright Star! Would I Were Steadfast As Thou Art . . . 655

Nineteenth Century Lyrics . . . 656

ROBERT SOUTHEY (1774–1843)
The Battle of Blenheim . . . 656

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR (1775–1864)
Rose Aylmer . . . 657
Mild is the Parting Year . . . 657
Past Ruined Ilion . . . 657
The Death of Artemidora . . . 657
Dirce . . . 658
On Lucretia Borgia's Hair . . . 658
Memory and Pride . . . 658
The Love of Other Years . . . 658
To Robert Browning . . . 658

PAGE

On Timely Death 658
To Age 658
On his Seventy-Fifth Birthday 659

THOMAS CAMPBELL (1777–1844)
Ye Mariners of England 659

THOMAS MOORE (1779–1852)
Oft in the Stilly Night 659
The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls 660

LEIGH HUNT (1784–1859)
Rondeau 660

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK (1785–1866)
The Men of Gotham 660
The War-Song of Dinas Vawr 660
The Friar's Song 661

CHARLES WOLFE (1791–1823)
The Burial of Sir John Moore 661

JOHN KEBLE (1792–1866)
United States 661

THOMAS HOOD (1798–1845)
Fair Ines 662
The Bridge of Sighs 662
The Song of the Shirt 663

WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED (1802–1839)
The Belle of the Ball-Room 664
A Letter of Advice 665

WILLIAM BARNES (1801–1886)
Blackmwore Maidens 667
The Surprise 667

THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES (1803–1849)
Dream-Pedlary 667
Ballad of Human Life 668
To Sea, To Sea! 668
Dirge ('If thou wilt ease thine heart') 668
Song ('Old Adam, the carrion crow,') 669

EDWARD FITZGERALD (1809–1883)
The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam 669

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING (1809–1861)
A Musical Instrument 670
Sonnets from the Portuguese 670

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811–1863)
At the Church Gate 672
The End of the Play 672

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH (1819–1861)
Qua Cursum Ventus 673
Whither Depart the Brave 673
Where Lies the Land 674
Ah! Yet Consider it Again! 674
In the Depths 674
The Latest Decalogue 674
Say not the Struggle Nought Availeth 674
Life is Struggle 675

FREDERICK LOCKER-LAMPSON (1821–1895)
To My Grandmother 675
My Mistress's Boots 676

COVENTRY PATMORE (1823–1896)
The Spirit's Epochs 676
The Married Lover 676
If I Were Dead 677

SIDNEY DOBELL (1824–1874)
America 677

PAGE

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI (1830–1894)
Song ('When I am dead, my dearest') . . . 677
Remember . . . 678
Abnegation . . . 678
Trust . . . 678
Up-Hill . . . 678

CHARLES STUART CALVERLEY (1831–1884)
Companions . . . 678

AUSTIN DOBSON (1840—)
A Dead Letter . . . 679

JAMES THOMSON (1834–1882)
Melencolia . . . 681

ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY (1844–1881)
Has Summer Come without the Rose . . . 682
Ode ('We are the music-makers') . . . 682

THOMAS DE QUINCEY (1785–1859)
Confessions of an English Opium Eater . . . 683

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY (1800–1859) . . . 691
The Romance of History . . . 691
The History of England, Vol. I, Chapter III . . . 697

JOHN HENRY, CARDINAL NEWMAN (1801–1890) . . . 702
The Idea of a University, Discourse VI . . . 703

THOMAS CARLYLE (1795–1881) . . . 714
Past and Present, Book III . . . 714
Book IV . . . 730

JOHN RUSKIN (1819–1900) . . . 733
Traffic . . . 733

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809–1892) . . . 745
Mariana . . . 745
Song ('A spirit haunts the year's last hours') . . . 746
The Poet . . . 746
The Lady of Shalott . . . 747
The Palace of Art . . . 749
A Dream of Fair Women . . . 753
Saint Agnes' Eve . . . 757
You Ask Me Why, Though Ill at Ease . . . 757
Of Old Sat Freedom on the Heights . . . 757
Sir Galahad . . . 758
A Farewell . . . 759
Morte D'Arthur . . . 759
Ulysses . . . 762
Locksley Hall . . . 763
Break, Break, Break . . . 767
The Poet's Song . . . 767
Songs from The Princess . . . 768
In Memoriam A. H. H. . . . 769
Maud; A Melodrama . . . 771
Song: from Guinevere . . . 778
Tithonus . . . 778
Milton . . . 778
Northern Farmer, Old Style . . . 779
The Revenge . . . 779
To Virgil . . . 781
'Frater Ave Atque Vale' . . . 783
Vastness . . . 783
Crossing the Bar . . . 783

ROBERT BROWNING (1812–1889) . . . 784
Songs from 'Pippa Passes' . . . 785
All Service Ranks the Same with God
The Year's at the Spring . . . 786
Give Her but a Least Excuse . . . 786
My Last Duchess . . . 786

PAGE

Count Gismond 787
Incident of the French Camp 788
The Italian in England 789
The Lost Leader 790
Home-Thoughts from Abroad 791
Home-Thoughts from the Sea 791
Saul 791
Love Among the Ruins 797
A Woman's Last Word 799
A Toccata of Galuppi's 799
My Star 800
The Last Ride Together 800
Memorabilia 802
'De Gustibus' 802
Andrea Del Sarto 802
The Guardian-Angel 806
A Grammarian's Funeral 807
One Word More 808
Abt Vogler 811
Rabbi Ben Ezra 813
Prospice 816
Hervé Riel 816
The Two Poets of Croisic: Prologue 818
Epilogue 818
Pheidippides 820
Asolando: Epilogue 822

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822–1888) 823
The Study of Poetry 823
Shakspere 837
The Forsaken Merman 837
The Buried Life 838
Self-Dependence 840
Morality 840
Sohrab and Rustum 840
The Scholar Gipsy 852
Requiescat 856
Rugby Chapel 857

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI (1828–1882) 859
My Sister's Sleep 859
The Blessed Damozel 860
Francesca Da Rimini 861
Love's Nocturn 862
The Cloud Confines 863
Three Shadows 864
The King's Tragedy 864

Sonnets from The House of Life

A Sonnet is a Moment's Monument 873
Love-Sight 874
Silent Noon 874
Love-Sweetness 874
Mid-Rapture 874
Stillborn Love 874
Inclusiveness 875
Known in Vain 875
The Choice, I 875
II 875
III 875
Lost Days 876
A Superscription 876
The One Hope 876

WILLIAM MORRIS (1834–1896) 877
The Earthly Paradise 877
Atalanta's Race 878
The Lady of the Land 887

PAGE

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE (1837–1909) 895
Choruses from Atalanta in Calydon
'When the hounds of Spring!' 895
'Before the beginning of years' 896
'We have seen thee, O Love' 896
The Garden of Proserpine 898
Hertha 899
A Forsaken Garden 901
Thalassius 903
Etude Realiste 906
The Roundel 906
On a Country Road 907
The Armada, 1588–1888 907
Cor Cordum 915
'Non Dolet' 915
On the Deaths of Thomas Carlyle and George Eliot 915
Christopher Marlowe 915

WALTER HORATIO PATER (1839–1894) 916
Style 916

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (1850–1894) 928
The Foreigner at Home 929
François Villon, Student, Poet, and Housebreaker 934
A Child's Garden of Verses
Whole Duty of Children 947
Bed in Summer 947
System 947
Happy Thought 947
To Auntie 947
In the States 947
Heather Ale 948

GEORGE MEREDITH (1828–1909) 949
Love in the Valley 949
The Last Words of Juggling Jerry 953
The Old Chartist 954
France, 1870 956
The Lark Ascending 960
The Woods of Westermain 961
Modern Love 966

THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY (1825–1895)
Emancipation — Black and White 967

SAMUEL BUTLER (1835–1902)
The Note-books
Young People 970
The Family 970
Unconscious Humor 971
Homer's *Odyssey* 971
Melchisedec 971
Bacon for Breakfast 971
God and Man 971
The Homeric Deity and the *Pall Mall Gazette* 971
Good Breeding the Summum Bonum 972
Advice to the Young 972
Religion 972
Heaven and Hell 972
Priggishness 972
Lohengrin 972
Swells 972
Science and Religion 972
Gentleman 973
The Finest Men 973
On Being a Swell All Round 973
Money 973
A Luxurious Death 973

PAGE

Money, Health, and Reputation 973
Solicitors 973
Doctors 973
Priests 973

GEORGE MOORE (1853–)
The Organization of Art 974

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW (1856–)
The Case for the Critic-Dramatist 976

JOSEPH CONRAD (1857–)
With the Marseilles Pilots 978

H. G. WELLS (1866–)
The Contemporary Novel 983

JOHN GALSWORTHY (1867–)
The Lost Dog 987

GILBERT K. CHESTERTON (1873–)
The Return of the Barbarian 989

Later Victorian and Contemporary Lyrics

ROBERT BRIDGES (1844–)
The Growth of Love (Sonnet No. 50) 994
Moonlight 994

ALICE MEYNELL (1848–)
Parted 994
The Lady Poverty 995
The Shepherdess 995

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY (1849–1903)
Out of the Night that Covers Me 995
Pro Rege Nostro 995

SIR WILLIAM WATSON (1856–)
Wordsworth's Grave 996

JOHN DAVIDSON (1857–1909)
Thirty Bob a Week 996

FRANCIS THOMPSON (1859–1907)
The Hound of Heaven 998

ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN (1859–)
A Shropshire Lad
IV. Reveille 1000
V. 1000
XXXIV. The New Mistress 1000
XLI. 1001
XLIX. 1001

SIR HENRY NEWBOLT (1862–)
Drake's Drum 1001
Vitai Lampada 1002
Clifton Chapel 1002

RUDYARD KIPLING (1865–)
The Ballad of East and West 1002
Danny Deever 1004
Recessional 1005

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865–)
The Lake Isle of Innisfree 1005
Into the Twilight 1005
Red Hanrahan's Song about Ireland 1006
Song from The Land of Heart's Desire 1006

"A. E." [GEORGE RUSSELL] (1862–)
The Earth Breath 1006

HILAIRE BELLOC (1870–)
The South Country 1006

WALTER DE LA MARE (1873–)
All That's Past 1007
Miss Loo 1007

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770–1850)

Wordsworth was born at Cockermouth in Cumberland, and educated at Hawkshead Grammar School between Esthwaite Water and Windermere in the Lake District, with which his whole life was closely connected. At St. John's College, Cambridge, according to his own account, he was neither among the 'loyal students faithful to their books,' nor among the 'honest dunces,' but one of the 'half-and-half idlers' who 'read lazily in trivial books,' amused themselves with athletic sports, 'and let the stars Come forth, perhaps, without one quiet thought.' In recollection, Wordsworth probably exaggerated his youthful idleness, for he read extensively, in both classical and modern languages, but he 'was not for that hour, nor for that place,' and he undoubtedly profited more, intellectually and spiritually, by his vacations in the Lake District and in France. He became a warm sympathizer with the French revolutionary movement, which deeply stirred his imagination. The declaration of war between France and England and the Reign of Terror in France cast him into deep melancholy, but he clung to his revolutionary principles until the Napoleonic despotism finally threw him back into agreement with his conservative fellow-countrymen.

In this spiritual crisis Wordsworth owed much to the companionship of his sister Dorothy, with whom he decided to retire from the world and devote himself to 'plain living and high thinking.' A legacy of £900 from a young admirer (Raisley Calvert) enabled the Wordsworths, who were living in the Lake District on milk and potatoes, to carry out this resolution, and in 1795 they took a cottage at Racedown, in Worcestershire, where they were visited by Coleridge. In the autumn of 1797 the three friends took a long walk together in the Quantock Hills; and to pay the expenses of the excursion, the young men planned a small volume of poetry, which was published the following year by an obscure Bristol printer under the title of *Lyrical Ballads*. Containing Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* and *Wordsworth's Lines written above Tintern Abbey*, it marked very distinctly the two new streams of influence which were to enrich English poetry throughout the nineteenth century, and it has come to be regarded as one of the most important events in the history of literature, although at the time it attracted little attention. In the same year (1798) the Wordsworths and Coleridge sailed for Germany, where the latter plunged deep into the study of German literature and philosophy, while Wordsworth began the composition of *The Prelude*, an account of his own poetical and spiritual development, which was finished in 1805, although withheld from publication until after his death.

In 1799 Wordsworth and his sister settled permanently in the Lake District, their home for the next nine years being Dove Cottage, Grasmere. In 1800 the payment of a long deferred debt to the family enabled Wordsworth to marry a lifelong friend, Mary Hutchison, sung by him in 'She was a phantom of delight' and other poems. In 1813 he was given a government sinecure as distributor of stamps, which brought him in £400 a year, and he was able to remove to a larger house at Rydal Mount, where he stayed until his death. Most of his work now recognized as of the highest excellence was published by 1807, though his longest poem, *The Excursion*, appeared in 1814; *The White Doe of Rylstone* and *Laodamia* in 1815; *The Waggoner* and *Peter Bell* in 1819; the fine series of sonnets, *The River Duddon*, in 1820; and a less successful sequence, *Ecclesiastical Sketches*, in 1822. On the death of Southey in 1843, he was appointed Poet Laureate, and was in turn succeeded by Tennyson, who received 'the laurel greener from the brow, Of him who uttered nothing base.'

Wordsworth's most obvious service to English poetry was to free it from the bondage of the artificial diction which the school of Pope received as a tradition and hardened into a convention. Subsequent ages owe him a greater debt for opening their minds to truer and deeper relations with Nature, and their hearts to sympathy with simple things and simple people. But his greatest gift was neither a theory of diction nor a system of philosophy, but the union of high imaginative powers with a rare faculty of expression, which enabled him to enrich English poetry with priceless treasures. Matthew Arnold's conviction that 'the poetical performance of Wordsworth is after that of Shakspere and Milton . . . undoubtedly the most considerable in our language from the Elizabethan age to the present time' has been confirmed by the judgment of later critics.

PREFACE TO LATER ISSUES OF 'LYRICAL BALLADS'

The first volume of these poems has already been submitted to general perusal. It was publisned as an experiment, which, I hoped, might be of some use to ascertain, how far, by fitting to metrical arrangement a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation, that sort of pleasure and that quantity of pleasure may be imparted, which a poet may rationally endeavor to impart.

I had formed no very inaccurate estimate of the probable effect of those poems: I flattered myself that they who should be pleased with them would read them with more than common pleasure; and, on the other hand, I was well aware, that by those who should dislike them, they would be read with more than common dislike. The result has differed from my expectation in this only, that a greater number have been pleased than I ventured to hope I should please.

Several of my friends are anxious for the success of these poems from a belief, that, if the views with which they were composed were indeed realized, a class of poetry would be produced well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and not unimportant in the quality and in the multiplicity of its moral relations: and on this account they have advised me to add a systematic defense of the theory upon which the poems were written. But I was unwilling to undertake the task, because I knew that on this occasion the reader would look coldly upon my arguments, since I might be suspected of having been principally influenced by the selfish and foolish hope of *reasoning* him into an approbation of these particular poems: and I was still more unwilling to undertake the task, because, adequately to display my opinions, and fully to enforce my arguments, would require a space wholly disproportionate to a preface. For to treat the subject with the clearness and coherence of which it is susceptible, it would be necessary to give a full account of the present state of the public taste in this country, and to determine how far this taste is healthy or depraved; which, again, could not be determined, without pointing out, in what manner language and the human mind act and react on each other, and without retracing the revolutions, not of literature alone, but likewise of society itself. I have therefore altogether declined to enter regularly upon this defense; yet I am sensible, that there would be some impropriety in abruptly obtruding upon the public, without a few words of introduction, poems so materially different from those upon which general approbation is at present bestowed.

It is supposed, that by the act of writing in verse an author makes a formal engagement that he will gratify certain known habits of association; that he not only thus apprises the reader that certain classes of ideas and expressions will be found in his book, but that others will be carefully excluded. This exponent or symbol held forth by metrical language must in different eras of literature have excited very different expectations: for example, in the age of Catullus, Terence, and Lucretius, and that of Statius or Claudian; and in our own country, in the age of Shakspere and Beaumont and Fletcher, and that of Donne and Cowley, or Dryden, or Pope. I will not take upon me to determine the exact import of the promise which by the act of writing in verse an author, in the present day, makes to his reader; but it will undoubtedly appear to many persons that I have not fulfilled the terms of an engagement thus voluntarily contracted. They who have been accustomed to the gaudiness and inane phraseology of many modern writers, if they persist in reading this book to its conclusion, will, no doubt, frequently have to struggle with feelings of strangeness and awkwardness: they will look round for poetry, and will be induced to inquire by what species of courtesy these attempts can be permitted to assume that title. I hope therefore the reader will not censure me, for attempting to state what I have proposed to myself to perform; and also (as far as the limits of a preface will permit) to explain some of the chief reasons which have determined me in the choice of my purpose: that at least he may be spared any unpleasant feeling of disappoint-

ment, and that I myself may be protected from one of the most dishonorable accusations which can be brought against an author, namely, that of an indolence which prevents him from endeavoring to ascertain what is his duty, or, when his duty is ascertained, prevents him from performing it.

The principal object, then, proposed in these poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible, in a selection of language really used by men, and, at the same time, to throw over them a certain coloring of imagination, whereby ordinary things should be presented to the mind in an unusual aspect, and, further, and above all, to make these incidents and situations interesting by tracing in them, truly though not ostentatiously, the primary laws of our nature: chiefly, as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement. Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that condition of life our elementary feelings co-exist in a state of greater simplicity, and, consequently, may be more accurately contemplated, and more forcibly communicated; because the manners of rural life germinate from those elementary feelings; and from the necessary character of rural occupations, are more easily comprehended, and are more durable; and, lastly, because in that condition the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. The language, too, of these men is adopted (purified indeed from what appears to be its real defects, from all lasting and rational causes of dislike or disgust) because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, from their rank in society and the sameness and narrow circle of their intercourse, being less under the influence of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple and unelaborated expressions. Accordingly such a language, arising out of repeated experience and regular feelings, is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by poets, who think that they are conferring honor upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes, and fickle appetites, of their own creation.

I cannot, however, be insensible to the present outcry against the triviality and meanness, both of thought and language, which some of my contemporaries have occasionally introduced into their metrical compositions; and I acknowledge that this defect, where it exists, is more dishonorable to the writer's own character than false refinement or arbitrary innovation, though I should contend at the same time, that it is far less pernicious in the sum of its consequences. From such verses the poems in these volumes will be found distinguished at least by one mark of difference, that each of them has a worthy *purpose*. Not that I always began to write with a distinct purpose formally conceived; but habits of meditation have, I trust, so prompted and regulated my feelings, as that my descriptions of such objects as strongly excite those feelings, will be found to carry along with them a *purpose*. If this opinion is erroneous, I can have little right to the name of a poet. For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: and though this be true, poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man, who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. For our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and, as by contemplating the relation of these general representatives to each other, we discover what is really important to men, so, by the repetition and continuance of this act, our feelings will be connected with important subjects, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much sensibility, such habits of mind will be produced, that, by obeying blindly and mechanically the impulses of those habits,

we shall describe objects, and utter sentiments, of such a nature, and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the reader must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, and his affections strengthened and purified.

I have said that each of these poems has a purpose. But it is proper that I should mention one other circumstance which distinguishes these poems from the popular poetry of the day; it is this, that the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling. My meaning will be rendered perfectly intelligible by referring my reader to the poems entitled *Poor Susan* and the *Childless Father,* particularly to the last stanza of the latter poem.

I will not suffer a sense of false modesty to prevent me from asserting, that I point my reader's attention to this mark of distinction, far less for the sake of these particular poems than from the general importance of the subject. The subject is indeed important! For the human mind is capable of being excited without the application of gross and violent stimulants; and he must have a very faint perception of its beauty and dignity who does not know this, and who does not further know, that one being is elevated above another, in proportion as he possesses this capability. It has therefore appeared to me, that to endeavor to produce or enlarge this capability is one of the best services in which, at any period, a writer can be engaged; but this service, excellent at all times, is especially so at the present day. For a multitude of causes, unknown to former times, are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and unfitting it for all voluntary exertion, to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the increasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident, which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves. The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakspere and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse.—When I think upon this degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation, I am almost ashamed to have spoken of the feeble endeavor made in these volumes to counteract it; and, reflecting upon the magnitude of the general evil, I should be oppressed with no dishonorable melancholy, had I not a deep impression of certain inherent and indestructible qualities of the human mind, and likewise of certain powers in the great and permanent objects that act upon it, which are equally inherent and indestructible; and did I not further add to this impression a belief, that the time is approaching when the evil will be systematically opposed, by men of greater powers, and with far more distinguished success.

Having dwelt thus long on the subjects and aim of these poems, I shall request the reader's permission to apprise him of a few circumstances relating to their *style,* in order, among other reasons, that I may not be censured for not having performed what I never attempted. The reader will find that personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur in these volumes; and, I hope, are utterly rejected, as an ordinary device to elevate the style, and raise it above prose. I have proposed to myself to imitate, and, as far as is possible, to adopt the very language of men; and assuredly such personifications do not make any natural or regular part of that language. They are, indeed, a figure of speech occasionally prompted by passion, and I have made use of them as such; but I have endeavored utterly to reject them as a mechanical device of style, or as a family language which writers in meter seem to lay claim to by prescription. I have wished to keep my reader in the company of flesh and blood, persuaded that by so doing I shall interest him. Others who pursue a different track will interest him likewise; I do not interfere with their claim, but wish to prefer a different claim of my own. There will also be found in these pieces little of what is usually called poetic diction; as much pains has been taken to avoid it as is ordinarily taken

to produce it; this has been done for the reason already alleged, to bring my language near to the language of men, and further, because the pleasure which I have proposed to myself to impart, is of a kind very different from that which is supposed by many persons to be the proper object of poetry. Without being culpably particular, I do not know how to give my reader a more exact notion of the style in which it was my wish and intention to write, than, by informing him that I have at all times endeavored to look steadily at my subject; consequently, there is, I hope in these poems little falsehood of description, and my ideas are expressed in language fitted to their respective importance. Something must have been gained by this practice, as it is friendly to one property of all good poetry, namely, good sense; but it has necessarily cut me off from a large portion of phrases and figures of speech which from father to son have long been regarded as the common inheritance of poets. I have also thought it expedient to restrict myself still further, having abstained from the use of many expressions, in themselves proper and beautiful, but which have been foolishly repeated by bad poets, till such feelings of disgust are connected with them as it is scarcely possible by any art of association to overpower.

If in a poem there should be found a series of lines, or even a single line, in which the language, though naturally arranged, and according to the strict laws of meter, does not differ from that of prose, there is a numerous class of critics who, when they stumble upon these prosaisms, as they call them, imagine that they have made a notable discovery, and exult over the poet as over a man ignorant of his own profession. Now these men would establish a canon of criticism which the reader will conclude he must utterly reject, if he wishes to be pleased with these pieces. And it would be a most easy task to prove to him, that not only the language of a large portion of every good poem, even of the most elevated character, must necessarily, except with reference to the meter, in no respect differ from that of good prose, but likewise that some of the most interesting parts of the best poems will be found to be strictly the language of prose, when prose is well written. The truth of this assertion might be demonstrated by innumerable passages from almost all the poetical writings, even of Milton himself. To illustrate the subject in a general manner, I will here adduce a short composition of Gray, who was at the head of those who, by their reasonings, have attempted to widen the space of separation betwixt prose and metrical composition, and was more than any other man curiously elaborate in the structure of his own poetic diction.

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
And reddening Phœbus lifts his golden fire:
The birds in vain their amorous descant join,
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire.
These ears, alas! for other notes repine;
A different object do these eyes require;
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire:
Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
And new-born pleasure brings to happier men;
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
To warm their little loves the birds complain.
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
And weep the more because I weep in vain.

It will easily be perceived, that the only part of this sonnet which is of any value is the lines printed in italics; it is equally obvious, that, except in the rime, and in the use of the single word 'fruitless' for fruitlessly, which is so far a defect, the language of these lines does in no respect differ from that of prose.

By the foregoing quotation I have shown that the language of prose may yet be well adapted to poetry; and it was previously asserted, that a large portion of the language of every good poem can in no respect differ from that of good prose. We will go further. It may be safely affirmed, that there neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition. We are fond of tracing the resemblance between poetry and painting, and, accordingly, we call them sisters: but where shall we find bonds of connection sufficiently strict to typify the affinity betwixt metrical and prose composition? They both speak by and to the

same organs; the bodies in which both of them are clothed may be said to be of the same substance, their affections are kindred, and almost identical, not necessarily differing in degree; poetry[1] sheds no tears 'such as angels weep' but natural and human tears; she can boast of no celestial ichor that distinguishes her vital juices from those of prose; the same human blood circulates through the veins of them both.

If it be affirmed that rime and metrical arrangement of themselves constitute a distinction which overturns what has just been said on the strict affinity of metrical language with that of prose, and paves the way for other artificial distinctions which the mind voluntarily admits, I answer that the language of such poetry as is here recommended is, as far as is possible, a selection of the language really spoken by men; that this selection, whereever it is made with true taste and feeling, will of itself form a distinction far greater than would at first be imagined, and will entirely separate the composition from the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life; and, if meter be superadded thereto, I believe that a dissimilitude will be produced altogether sufficient for the gratification of a rational mind. What other distinction would we have? Whence is it to come? And where is it to exist? Not, surely, where the poet speaks through the mouths of his characters: it cannot be necessary here, either for elevation of style, or any of its supposed ornaments: for, if the poet's subject be judiciously chosen, it will naturally, and upon fit occasion, lead him to passions the language of which, if selected truly and judiciously, must necessarily be dignified and variegated, and alive with metaphors and figures. I forbear to speak of an incongruity which would shock the intelligent reader should the poet interweave any foreign splendor of his own with that which the passion naturally suggests: it is sufficient to say that such addition is unnecessary. And, surely, it is more probable that those passages, which with propriety abound with metaphors and figures, will have their due effect, if, upon other occasions where the passions are of a milder character, the style also be subdued and temperate.

But, as the pleasure which I hope to give by the poems now presented to the reader must depend entirely on just notions upon this subject, and, as it is in itself of high importance to our taste and moral feelings, I cannot content myself with these detached remarks. And if, in what I am about to say, it shall appear to some that my labor is unnecessary, and that I am like a man fighting a battle without enemies, such persons may be reminded, that, whatever may be the language outwardly holden by men, a practical faith in the opinions which I am wishing to establish is almost unknown. If my conclusions are admitted, and carried as far as they must be carried if admitted at all, our judgments concerning the works of the greatest poets both ancient and modern will be far different from what they are at present, both when we praise, and when we censure: and our moral feelings influencing and influenced by these judgments will, I believe, be corrected and purified.

Taking up the subject, then, upon general grounds, let me ask what is meant by the word 'poet'? What is a poet? To whom does he address himself? And what language is to be expected from him? He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endowed with more lively sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature, and a more comprehensive soul, than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions, and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them. To these qualities he has added, a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present;

[1] I here use the word 'poetry' (though against my own judgment) as opposed to the word 'prose,' and synonymous with metrical composition. But much confusion has been introduced into criticism by this contradistinction of poetry and prose, instead of the more philosophical one of poetry and matter of fact, or science. The only strict antithesis to prose is meter; nor is this, in truth, a *strict* antithesis; because lines and passages of meter so naturally occur in writing prose, that it would be scarcely possible to avoid them, even were it desirable.

an ability of conjuring up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves; whence, and from practice, he has acquired a greater readiness and power in expressing what he thinks and feels, and especially those thoughts and feelings which, by his own choice, or from the structure of his own mind, arise in him without immediate external excitement.

But, whatever portion of this faculty we may suppose even the greatest poet to possess, there cannot be a doubt but that the language which it will suggest to him must often, in liveliness and truth, fall far short of that which is uttered by men in real life, under the actual pressure of those passions, certain shadows of which the poet thus produces, or feels to be produced, in himself.

However exalted a notion we would wish to cherish of the character of a poet, it is obvious, that, while he describes and imitates passions, his employment is in some degree mechanical, compared with the freedom and power of real and substantial action and suffering. So that it will be the wish of the poet to bring his feelings near to those of the persons whose feelings he describes, nay, for short spaces of time, perhaps, to let himself slip into an entire delusion, and even confound and identify his own feelings with theirs; modifying only the language which is thus suggested to him by a consideration that he describes for a particular purpose, that of giving pleasure. Here, then, he will apply the principle of selection which has been already insisted upon. He will depend upon this for removing what would otherwise be painful or disgusting in the passion; he will feel that there is no necessity to trick out or to elevate nature: and, the more industriously he applies this principle, the deeper will be his faith that no words, which *his* fancy or imagination can suggest, will be to be compared with those which are the emanations of reality and truth

But it may be said by those who do not object to the general spirit of these remarks, that, as it is impossible for the poet to produce upon all occasions language as exquisitely fitted for the passion as that which the real passion itself suggests, it is proper that he should consider himself as in the situation of a translator, who does not scruple to substitute excellencies of another kind for those which are unattainable by him; and endeavors occasionally to surpass his original in order to make some amends for the general inferiority to which he feels that he must submit. But this would be to encourage idleness and unmanly despair. Further, it is the language of men who speak of what they do not understand; who talk of poetry as of a matter of amusement and idle pleasure; who will converse with us as gravely about a *taste* for poetry, as they express it, as if it were a thing as indifferent as a taste for rope-dancing, or frontiniac or sherry. Aristotle, I have been told, has said, that poetry is the most philosophic of all writing: it is so: its object is truth, not individual and local, but general, and operative; not standing upon external testimony, but carried alive into the heart by passion; truth which is its own testimony, which gives competence and confidence to the tribunal to which it appeals, and receives them from the same tribunal. Poetry is the image of man and nature. The obstacles which stand in the way of the fidelity of the biographer and historian and of their consequent utility, are incalculably greater than those which are to be encountered by the poet who comprehends the dignity of his art. The poet writes under one restriction only, namely, that of the necessity of giving immediate pleasure to a human being possessed of that information which may be expected from him, not as a lawyer, a physician, a mariner, an astronomer, or a natural philosopher, but as a man. Except this one restriction, there is no object standing between the poet and the image of things; between this, and the biographer and historian there are a thousand.

Nor let this necessity of producing immediate pleasure be considered as a degradation of the poet's art. It is far otherwise. It is an acknowledgment of

the beauty of the universe, an acknowledgment the more sincere, because not formal, but indirect; it is a task light and easy to him who looks at the world in the spirit of love: further, it is a homage paid to the native and naked dignity of man, to the grand elementary principle of pleasure, by which he knows, and feels, and lives, and moves. We have no sympathy but what is propagated by pleasure: I would not be misunderstood; but wherever we sympathize with pain, it will be found that the sympathy is produced and carried on by subtle combinations with pleasure. We have no knowledge, that is, no general principles drawn from the contemplation of particular facts, but what has been built up by pleasure, and exists in us by pleasure alone. The man of science, the chemist and mathematician, whatever difficulties and disgusts they may have had to struggle with, know and feel this. However painful may be the objects with which the anatomist's knowledge is connected, he feels that his knowledge is pleasure; and where he has no pleasure he has no knowledge. What then does the poet? He considers man and the objects that surround him as acting and reacting upon each other, so as to produce an infinite complexity of pain and pleasure; he considers man in his own nature and in his ordinary life as contemplating this with a certain quantity of immediate knowledge, with certain convictions, intuitions, and deductions, which from habit acquire the quality of intuitions; he considers him as looking upon this complex scene of ideas and sensations, and finding everywhere objects that immediately excite in him sympathies which, from the necessities of his nature, are accompanied by an overbalance of enjoyment.

To this knowledge which all men carry about with them, and to these sympathies in which without any other discipline than that of our daily life, we are fitted to take delight, the poet principally directs his attention. He considers man and nature as essentially adapted to each other, and the mind of man as naturally the mirror of the fairest and most interesting qualities of nature. And thus the poet, prompted by this feeling of pleasure which accompanies him through the whole course of his studies, converses with general nature with affections akin to those, which, through labor and length of time, the man of science has raised up in himself, by conversing with those particular parts of nature which are the objects of his studies. The knowledge both of the poet and the man of science is pleasure; but the knowledge of the one cleaves to us as a necessary part of our existence, our natural and inalienable inheritance; the other is a personal and individual acquisition, slow to come to us, and by no habitual and direct sympathy connecting us with our fellow-beings. The man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and hourly companion. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science. Emphatically may it be said of the poet, as Shakspere hath said of man, 'that he looks before and after.' He is the rock of defence of human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with him relationship and love. In spite of difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs, in spite of things silently gone out of mind, and things violently destroyed, the poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth, and over all time. The objects of the poet's thoughts are everywhere; though the eyes and senses of man are, it is true, his favorite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge — it is as immortal as the heart of man. If the labors of men of science should ever create any material revolution, direct or indirect, in our condition, and in the impressions which we habitually receive, the poet will sleep then no more than at present, but he will be ready to follow the steps of the man of science, not only in those general indirect effects, but he will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the science itself. The remotest discoveries of the chemist, the

botanist, or mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the poet's art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated by the followers of these respective sciences shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings. If the time should ever come when what is now called science, thus familiarized to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the being thus produced, as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man.— It is not, then, to be supposed that any one, who holds that sublime notion of poetry which I have attempted to convey, will break in upon the sanctity and truth of his pictures by transitory and accidental ornaments, and endeavor to excite admiration of himself by arts, the necessity of which must manifestly depend upon the assumed meanness of his subject.

What I have thus far said applies to poetry in general; but especially to those parts of composition where the poet speaks through the mouths of his characters; and upon this point it appears to authorize the conclusion, that there are few persons of good sense, who would not allow that the dramatic parts of composition are defective, in proportion as they deviate from the real language of nature, and are colored by a diction of the poet's own, either peculiar to him as an individual poet or belonging simply to poets in general, to a body of men who, from the circumstance of their compositions being in meter, it is expected will employ a particular language.

It is not, then, in the dramatic parts of composition that we look for this distinction of language; but still it may be proper and necessary where the poet speaks to us in his own person and character. To this I answer by referring my reader to the description which I have before given of a poet. Among the qualities which I have enumerated as principally conducing to form a poet, is implied nothing differing in kind from other men, but only in degree. The sum of what I have there said is, that the poet is chiefly distinguished from other men by a greater promptness to think and feel without immediate external excitement, and a greater power in expressing such thoughts and feelings as are produced in him in that manner. But these passions and thoughts and feelings are the general passions and thoughts and feelings of men. And with what are they connected? Undoubtedly with our moral sentiments and animal sensations, and with the causes which excite these; with the operations of the elements, and the appearances of the visible universe; with storm and sunshine, with the revolutions of the seasons, with cold and heat, with loss of friends and kindred, with injuries and resentments, gratitude and hope, with fear and sorrow. These, and the like, are the sensations and objects which the poet describes, as they are the sensations of other men, and the objects which interest them. The poet thinks and feels in the spirit of the passions of men. How, then, can his language differ in any material degree from that of all other men who feel vividly and see clearly? It might be *proved* that it is impossible. But supposing that this were not the case, the poet might then be allowed to use a peculiar language when expressing his feelings for his own gratification, or that of men like himself. But poets do not write for poets alone, but for men. Unless therefore we are advocates for that admiration which subsists upon ignorance, and that pleasure which arises from hearing what we do not understand, the poet must descend from this supposed height, and, in order to excite rational sympathy, he must express himself as other men express themselves. To this it may be added, that while he is only selecting from the real language of men, or, which amounts to the same thing, composing accurately in the spirit of such selection, he is treading upon safe ground, and we know what we are to expect from him. Our feelings are the same with respect to meter; for, as it may be proper to remind the reader, the distinction of meter is regular and uniform, and not, like that which is produced by what is usually called poetic diction, arbitrary, and subject to infinite caprices upon which no calculation whatever can be made. In the one case, the reader is utterly at the mercy of the poet

respecting what imagery or diction he may choose to connect with the passion, whereas, in the other, the meter obeys certain laws, to which the poet and reader both willingly submit because they are certain, and because no interference is made by them with the passion but such as the concurring testimony of ages has shown to heighten and improve the pleasure which co-exists with it.

It will now be proper to answer an obvious question, namely, Why, professing these opinions, have I written in verse? To this, in addition to such answer as is included in what I have already said, I reply, in the first place, Because, however I may have restricted myself, there is still left open to me what confessedly constitutes the most valuable object of all writing, whether in prose or verse, the great and universal passions of men, the most general and interesting of their occupations, and the entire world of nature before me to supply endless combinations of forms and imagery. Now, supposing for a moment that whatever is interesting in these objects may be as vividly described in prose, why should I be condemned, for attempting to superadd to such description the charm, which, by the consent of all nations, is acknowledged to exist in metrical language? To this, by such as are yet unconvinced, it may be answered that a very small part of the pleasure given by poetry depends upon the meter, and that it is injudicious to write in meter, unless it be accompanied with the other artificial distinctions of style with which meter is usually accompanied, and that, by such deviation, more will be lost from the shock which will thereby be given to the reader's associations than will be counterbalanced by any pleasure which he can derive from the general power of numbers. In answer to those who still contend for the necessity of accompanying meter with certain appropriate colors of style in order to the accomplishment of its appropriate end, and who also, in my opinion, greatly underrate the power of meter in itself, it might, perhaps, as far as relates to these volumes, have been almost sufficient to observe, that poems are extant, written upon more humble subjects, and in a more naked and simple style than I have aimed at, which poems have continued to give pleasure from generation to generation. Now, if nakedness and simplicity be a defect, the fact here mentioned affords a strong presumption that poems somewhat less naked and simple are capable of affording pleasure at the present day; and, what I wished *chiefly* to attempt, at present, was to justify myself for having written under the impression of this belief.

But various causes might be pointed out why, when the style is manly, and the subject of some importance, words metrically arranged will long continue to impart such a pleasure to mankind as he who is sensible of the extent of that pleasure will be desirous to impart. The end of poetry is to produce excitement in coexistence with an overbalance of pleasure. Now, by the supposition, excitement is an unusual and irregular state of the mind; ideas and feelings do not, in that state, succeed each other in accustomed order. If the words, however, by which this excitement is produced be in themselves powerful, or the images and feelings have an undue proportion of pain connected with them, there is some danger that the excitement may be carried beyond its proper bounds. Now the co-presence of something regular, something to which the mind has been accustomed in various moods, and in a less excited state, cannot but have great efficacy in tempering and restraining the passion by an intertexture of ordinary feeling, and of feeling not strictly and necessarily connected with the passion. This is unquestionably true, and hence, though the opinion will at first appear paradoxical, from the tendency of meter to divest language, in a certain degree, of its reality, and thus to throw a sort of half consciousness of unsubstantial existence over the whole composition, there can be little doubt, but that more pathetic situations and sentiments, that is, those which have a greater proportion of pain connected with them, may be endured in metrical composition, especially in rime, than in prose. The meter of the old ballads is very artless; yet they contain many passages which would illustrate this opinion, and I hope, if the following poems be attentively perused, similar instances will be found

in them. This opinion may be further illustrated by appealing to the reader's own experience of the reluctance with which he comes to the re-perusal of the distressful parts of Clarissa Harlowe, or the Gamester. While Shakspere's writings, in the most pathetic scenes, never act upon us, as pathetic, beyond the bounds of pleasure — an effect which, in a much greater degree than might at first be imagined, is to be ascribed to small, but continual and regular impulses of pleasurable surprise from the metrical arrangement.— On the other hand, (what it must be allowed will much more frequently happen,) if the poet's words should be incommensurate with the passion, and inadequate to raise the reader to a height of desirable excitement, then, (unless the poet's choice of his meter has been grossly injudicious,) in the feelings of pleasure which the reader has been accustomed to connect with meter in general, and in the feeling, whether cheerful or melancholy, which he has been accustomed to connect with that particular movement of meter, there will be found something which will greatly contribute to impart passion to the words, and to effect the complex end which the poet proposes to himself.

If I had undertaken a systematic defense of the theory here maintained, it would have been my duty to develop the various causes upon which the pleasure received from metrical language depends. Among the chief of these causes is to be reckoned a principle which must be well known to those who have made any of the arts the object of accurate reflection; I mean the pleasure which the mind derives from the perception of similitude in dissimilitude. This principle is the great spring of the activity of our minds, and their chief feeder. From this principle the direction of the sexual appetite, and all the passions connected with it, take their origin: it is the life of our ordinary conversation; and upon the accuracy with which similitude in dissimilitude, and dissimilitude in similitude are perceived, depend our taste and our moral feelings. It would not be a useless employment to apply this principle to the consideration of meter, and to show that meter is hence enabled to afford much pleasure, and to point out in what manner that pleasure is produced. But my limits will not permit me to enter upon this subject, and I must content myself with a general summary.

I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity; the emotion is contemplated, till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on; but the emotion of whatever kind, and in whatever degree, from various causes, is qualified by various pleasures, so that in describing any passions whatsoever, which are voluntarily described, the mind will, upon the whole, be in a state of enjoyment. If nature be thus cautious to preserve in a state of enjoyment a being so employed, the poet ought to profit by the lesson held forth to him, and ought especially to take care, that, whatever passions he communicates to his reader, those passions, if his reader's mind be sound and vigorous, should always be accompanied with an overbalance of pleasure. Now the music of harmonious metrical language, the sense of difficulty overcome, and the blind association of pleasure which has been previously received from works of rime or meter of the same or similar construction, an indistinct perception perpetually renewed of language closely resembling that of real life, and yet, in the circumstance of meter, differing from it so widely — all these imperceptibly make up a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feeling which is always found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions. This effect is always produced in pathetic and impassioned poetry; while, in lighter compositions, the ease and gracefulness with which the poet manages his numbers are themselves confessedly a principal source of the gratification of the reader. All that it is *necessary* to say upon this subject, may be effected by affirming what few persons will deny, that, of two descriptions either of passions, manners, or

characters, each of them equally well executed, the one in prose and the other in verse, the verse will be read a hundred times where the prose is read once.

Having thus explained a few of the reasons for writing in verse, and why I have chosen subjects from common life, and endeavored to bring my language near to the real language of men, if I have been too minute in pleading my own cause, I have at the same time been treating a subject of general interest; and for this reason a few words shall be added with reference solely to these particular poems, and to some defects which will probably be found in them. I am sensible that my associations must have sometimes been particular instead of general, and that, consequently, giving to things a false importance, I may have sometimes written upon unworthy subjects; but I am less apprehensive on this account, than that my language may frequently have suffered from those arbitrary connections of feelings and ideas with particular words and phrases, from which no man can altogether protect himself. Hence I have no doubt, that, in some instances, feelings, even of the ludicrous, may be given to my readers by expressions which appeared to me tender and pathetic. Such faulty expressions, were I convinced they were faulty at present, and that they must necessarily continue to be so, I would willingly take all reasonable pains to correct. But it is dangerous to make these alterations on the simple authority of a few individuals, or even of certain classes of men; for where the understanding of an author is not convinced, or his feelings altered, this cannot be done without great injury to himself: for his own feelings are his stay and support; and, if he set them aside in one instance, he may be induced to repeat this act till his mind shall lose all confidence in itself, and becomes utterly debilitated. To this it may be added, that the reader ought never to forget that he is himself exposed to the same errors as the poet, and, perhaps, in a much greater degree: for there can be no presumption in saying of most readers that it is not probable they will be so well acquainted with the various stages of meaning through which words have passed, or with the fickleness or stability of the relations of particular ideas to each other; and. above all, since they are so much less interested in the subject, they may decide lightly and carelessly.

Long as the reader has been detained, I hope he will permit me to caution him against a mode of false criticism which has been applied to poetry, in which the language closely resembles that of life and nature. Such verses have been triumphed over in parodies of which Dr. Johnson's stanza is a fair specimen.

> I put my hat upon my head
> And walked into the Strand,
> And there I met another man
> Whose hat was in his hand.

Immediately under these lines I will place one of the most justly-admired stanzas of the 'Babes in the Wood.'

> These pretty babes with hand in hand
> Went wandering up and down;
> But never more they saw the Man
> Approaching from the Town.

In both these stanzas the words, and the order of the words, in no respect differ from the most unimpassioned conversation. There are words in both, for example, 'The Strand,' and 'The Town,' connected with none but the most familiar ideas; yet the one stanza we admit as admirable, and the other as a fair example of the superlatively contemptible. Whence arises this difference? Not from the meter, not from the language, not from the order of the words; but the *matter* expressed in Dr. Johnson's stanza is contemptible. The proper method of treating trivial and simple verses, to which Dr. Johnson's stanza would be a fair parallelism, is not to say, This is a bad kind of poetry, or, This is not poetry; but, This wants sense; it is neither interesting in itself, nor can *lead* to anything interesting; the images neither originate in that sane state of feeling which arises out of thought, nor can excite thought or feeling in the reader. This is the only sensible manner of dealing with such verses. Why trouble yourself about the species till you have previously decided upon the genus? Why take pains to prove that an ape is not a Newton, when it is self-evident that he is not a man?

I must make one request of my reader, which is, that in judging these poems he would decide by his own feelings genuinely, and not by reflection upon what will probably be the judgment of others. How common is it to hear a person say, 'I myself do not object to this style of composition, or this or that expression, but, to such and such classes of people, it will appear mean or ludicrous!' This mode of criticism, so destructive of all sound unadulterated judgment, is almost universal: let the reader then abide independently by his own feelings, and if he finds himself affected, let him not suffer such conjectures to interfere with his pleasure.

If an author, by any single composition, has impressed us with respect for his talents, it is useful to consider this as affording a presumption, that on other occasions where we have been displeased, he, nevertheless, may not have written ill or absurdly; and, further, to give him so much credit for this one composition as may induce us to review what has displeased us, with more care than we should otherwise have bestowed upon it. This is not only an act of justice, but, in our decisions upon poetry especially, may conduce, in a high degree, to the improvement of our own taste: for an *accurate* taste in poetry, and in all the other arts, as Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed, is an *acquired* talent, which can only be produced by thought and a long-continued intercourse with the best models of composition. This is mentioned, not with so ridiculous a purpose as to prevent the most inexperienced reader from judging for himself (I have already said that I wish him to judge for himself), but merely to temper the rashness of decision, and to suggest, that, if poetry be a subject on which much time has not been bestowed, the judgment may be erroneous; and that, in many cases, it necessarily will be so.

Nothing would, I know, have so effectually contributed to further the end which I have in view, as to have shown of what kind the pleasure is, and how that pleasure is produced, which is confessedly produced by metrical composition essentially different from that which I have here endeavored to recommend: for the reader will say that he has been pleased by such composition; and what more can be done for him? The power of any art is limited; and he will suspect, that, if it be proposed to furnish him with new friends, that can be only upon condition of his abandoning his old friends. Besides, as I have said, the reader is himself conscious of the pleasure which he has received from such composition, composition to which he has peculiarly attached the endearing name of poetry, and all men feel an habitual gratitude, and something of an honorable bigotry for the objects which have long continued to please them; we not only wish to be pleased, but to be pleased in that particular way in which we have been accustomed to be pleased. There is in these feelings enough to resist a host of arguments; and I should be the less able to combat them successfully, as I am willing to allow, that, in order entirely to enjoy the poetry which I am recommending, it would be necessary to give up much of what is ordinarily enjoyed. But, would my limits have permitted me to point out how this pleasure is produced, many obstacles might have been removed, and the reader assisted in perceiving that the powers of language are not so limited as he may suppose; and that it is possible for poetry to give other enjoyments, of a purer, more lasting, and more exquisite nature. This part of the subject has not been altogether neglected; but it has not been so much my present aim to prove, that the interest excited by some other kinds of poetry is less vivid, and less worthy of the nobler powers of the mind, as to offer reasons for presuming, that, if my purpose were fulfilled, a species of poetry would be produced, which is genuine poetry; in its nature well adapted to interest mankind permanently, and likewise important in the multiplicity and quality of its moral relations.

From what has been said, and from a perusal of the poems, the reader will be able clearly to perceive the object which I had in view; he will determine how far it has been attained; and, what is a much more important question, whether it be worth attaining; and upon the decision of these two questions will rest my claim to the approbation of the public.

(1800)

THE PRELUDE

FROM BOOK I

Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
Fostered alike by beauty and by fear:
Much favored in my birth-place, and no less
In that beloved Vale to which erelong
We were transplanted — there were we let loose
For sports of wider range. Ere I had told
Ten birth-days, when among the mountain slopes
Frost, and the breath of frosty wind, had snapped
The last autumnal crocus, 't was my joy
With store of springes o'er my shoulder hung
To range the open heights where woodcocks run
Along the smooth green turf. Through half the night,
Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied
That anxious visitation; — moon and stars
Were shining o'er my head. I was alone,
And seemed to be a trouble to the peace
That dwelt among them. Sometimes it befell
In these night wanderings, that a strong desire
O'erpowered my better reason, and the bird
Which was the captive of another's toil
Became my prey; and when the deed was done
I heard among the solitary hills
Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
Of undistinguishable motion, steps
Almost as silent as the turf they trod.

Nor less when spring had warmed the cultured Vale,
Moved we as plunderers where the mother-bird
Had in high places built her lodge; though mean
Our object and inglorious, yet the end
Was not ignoble. Oh! when I have hung
Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass
And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock
But ill sustained, and almost (so it seemed)
Suspended by the blast that blew amain,
Shouldering the naked crag, oh, at that time
While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,
With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind
Blow through my ear! the sky seemed not a sky
Of earth — and with what motion moved the clouds!

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
Like harmony in music; there is a dark
Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, makes them cling together
In one society. How strange that all
The terrors, pains, and early miseries,
Regrets, vexations, lassitudes interfused
Within my mind, should e'er have borne a part,
And that a needful part, in making up
The calm existence that is mine when I
Am worthy of myself! Praise to the end!
Thanks to the means which Nature deigned to employ;
Whether her fearless visitings, or those
That came with soft alarm, like hurtless light
Opening the peaceful clouds; or she may use
Severer interventions, ministry
More palpable, as best might suit her aim.

One summer evening (led by her) I found
A little boat tied to a willow tree
Within a rocky cave, its usual home.
Straight I unloosed her chain, and stepping in
Pushed from the shore. It was an act of stealth
And troubled pleasure, nor without the voice
Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on;
Leaving behind her still, on either side,
Small circles glittering idly in the moon,
Until they melted all into one track
Of sparkling light. But now, like one who rows,
Proud of his skill, to reach a chosen point
With an unswerving line, I fixed my view
Upon the summit of a craggy ridge,
The horizon's utmost boundary; far above
Was nothing but the stars and the gray sky.
She was an elfin pinnace; lustily
I dipped my oars into the silent lake,
And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat
Went heaving through the water like a swan;
When, from behind that craggy steep till then
The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge,
As if with voluntary power instinct
Upreared its head. I struck and struck again,
And growing still in stature the grim shape

Towered up between me and the stars, and still,
For so it seemed, with purpose of its own
And measured motion like a living thing,
Strode after me. With trembling oars I turned,
And through the silent water stole my way
Back to the covert of the willow tree;
There in her mooring-place I left my bark,—
And through the meadows homeward went, in grave
And serious mood; but after I had seen
That spectacle, for many days, my brain
Worked with a dim and undetermined sense
Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts
There hung a darkness, call it solitude
Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes
Remained, no pleasant images of trees,
Of sea or sky, no colors of green fields;
But huge and mighty forms that do not live
Like living men, moved slowly through the mind
By day, and were a trouble to my dreams.

Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!
Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought,
That givest to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion, not in vain
By day or star-light thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
But with high objects, with enduring things —
With life and nature — purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying, by such discipline,
Both pain and fear, until we recognize
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.
Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapors rolling down the valley made
A lonely scene more lonesome, among woods,
At noon and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills homeward I went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine;
Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
And by the waters, all the summer long.

And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and visible for many a mile
The cottage windows blazed through twilight gloom,
I heeded not their summons: happy time
It was indeed for all of us — for me
It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud
The village clock tolled six,— I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home. All shod with steel,
We hissed along the polished ice in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures,— the resounding horn,
The pack loud chiming, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle; with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while far distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy not unnoticed, while the stars
Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.
Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star
That fled, and, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain; and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me — even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round!
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.

(1850)

LINES

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR.

JULY 13, 1798

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur[1] — Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedgerows, hardly hedgerows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild; these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem,
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some hermit's cave, where by his fire
The hermit sits alone.
These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration: — feelings, too,
Of unremembered pleasure: such perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burden of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened: — that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame,
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft —
In darkness, and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart,
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! Thou wanderer through the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope.
Though, changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led; more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.— I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colors and their forms, were then to me

[1] The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.

An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.
Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

(1798)

STRANGE FITS OF PASSION HAVE I KNOWN

Strange fits of passion have I known:
And I will dare to tell,
But in the Lover's ear alone,
What once to me befell.

When she I loved looked every day,
Fresh as a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath an evening moon.

Upon the moon I fixed my eye,
All over the wide lea;
With quickening pace my horse drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reached the orchard plot;
And as we climbed the hill,
The sinking moon to Lucy's cot
Came near and nearer still.

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And all the while my eyes I kept
On the descending moon.

My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
He raised, and never stopped:
When down behind the cottage roof,
At once, the bright moon dropped.

What fond and wayward thought will slide
Into a lover's head! —
'Oh, mercy!' to myself I cried,
'If Lucy should be dead!'

(1800)

SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love.

A violet by a mossy stone
Half-hidden from the eye!
Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!

(1800)

I TRAVELED AMONG UNKNOWN MEN

I traveled among unknown men,
In lands beyond the sea;
Nor, England! did I know till then
What love I bore to thee.

'T is past, that melancholy dream!
Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time; for still I seem
To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire;
And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed
The bowers where Lucy played;
And thine too is the last green field
That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

(1807)

THREE YEARS SHE GREW IN SUN AND SHOWER

Three years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, 'A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This Child I to myself will take,
She shall be mine, and I will make
A Lady of my own.

'Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

'She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

'The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that shall mold the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

'The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

'And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell.'

Thus Nature spake — The work was done —
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

(1800)

A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL

A slumber did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
With rocks, and stones, and trees.

(1800)

MICHAEL

A PASTORAL POEM

If from the public way you turn your steps;
Up the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you face to face.
But courage! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen: but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude:
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
And to that simple object appertains,
A story unenriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of Shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved; — not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful Poets who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name;
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone; and, oftentimes,
When others heeded not, He heard the South
Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
'The winds are now devising work for me!'

And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives
The traveler to a shelter, summoned him
Up to the mountains; he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him and left him on the heights.
So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
The common air; hills, which with vigorous step
He had so often climbed; which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
Which like a book preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts,
The certainty of honorable gain;
Those fields, those hills — what could they less? — had laid
Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in singleness.
His Helpmate was a comely matron, old —
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had
Of antique form, this large for spinning wool,
That small for flax; and if one wheel had rest,
It was because the other was at work.
The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old,— in shepherd's phrase,
With one foot in the grave. This only Son,
With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,
The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors
The Son and Father were come home, even then,
Their labor did not cease; unless when all
Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the meal
Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)
And his old father both betook themselves
To such convenient work as might employ
Their hands by the fire-side; perhaps to card
Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling by the chimney's edge
That in our ancient uncouth country style
With huge and black projection overbrowed
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a lamp;
An aged utensil, which had performed
Service beyond all others of its kind.
Early at evening did it burn and late,
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
Which going by from year to year had found
And left the couple neither gay perhaps
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
Living a life of eager industry.
And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year
There by the light of this old lamp they sat,
Father and Son, while far into the night
The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage through the silent hours
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
This light was famous in its neighborhood,
And was a public symbol of the life
That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise.

And westward to the village near the lake;
And from this constant light, so regular
And so far seen, the House itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named The Evening Star.

Thus living on through such a length of years,
The shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his Helpmate; but to Michael's heart
This son of his old age was yet more dear —
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all —
Than that a child, more than all other gifts,
That earth can offer to declining man
Brings hope with it, and forward looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy! For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
His cradle as with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love,
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the Young one in his sight, when he
Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
Sat with a fettered sheep before him stretched,
Under the large old oak, that near his door,
Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,
Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The Clipping Tree,[1] a name which yet it bears.
There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew up
A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old,
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equipt
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help;
And for this course not always, I believe,
Receiving from his Father hire of praise;
Though nought was left undone which staff or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts; and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now? that from the Boy there came
Feelings and emanations — things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old Man's heart seemed born again.
Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up;
And now when he had reached his eighteenth year,
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound

[1] Clipping is the word used in the North of England for shearing.

In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means—
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had pressed upon him,—and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked for claim
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.
As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
And his heart failed him. 'Isabel,' said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
'I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
And I have lived to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him—but
'T were better to be dumb, than to talk thus.
When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
He shall possess it free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou knowest,
Another kinsman—he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go,
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is poor,
What can be gained?' At this the old Man paused,
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There 's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
He was a parish-boy—at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence,
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbours bought
A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;
And with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who out of many chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas: where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and monies to the poor,
And at his birthplace built a chapel floored
With marble, which he sent from foreign lands.
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel
And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,
And thus resumed:—'Well, Isabel! this scheme
These two days has been meat and drink to me.
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
We have enough—I wish indeed that I
Were younger,—but this hope is a good hope.
Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-night.'

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The Housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work: for, when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the last two nights
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
And when they rose at morning she could see

That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door. 'Thou must not go:
We have no other Child but thee to lose,
None to remember — do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father he will die.'
The Youth made answer with a jocund voice;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the Boy;
To which, requests were added, that forthwith
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbors round;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
'He shall depart to-morrow.' To this word
The Housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheep-fold; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walked;
And soon as they had reached the place he stopped,
And thus the old Man spake to him.—'My son,
To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories; 't will do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should touch
On things thou canst not know of.— After thou
First cam'st into the world — as oft befalls
To new-born infants — thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tune;
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month,
And in the open fields my life was passed
And on the mountains, else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke: among these hills,
As well thou know'st, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know.'
Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand
And said, 'Nay, do not take it so — I see
That these are things of which I need not speak.
Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father: and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others' hands; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together: here they lived

As all their forefathers had done; and when
At length their time was come, they were not loath
To give their bodies to the family mold.
I wished that thou shouldst live the life they lived.
But 't is a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.
These fields were burdened when they came to me;
Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
It looks as if it never could endure
Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou shouldst go.' At this the old Man paused;
Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,
Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
'This was a work for us; and now, my son,
It is a work for me. But, lay one stone —
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
Nay, Boy, be of good hope; — we both may live
To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale; — do thou thy part,
I will do mine. — I will begin again
With many tasks that were resigned to thee;
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
Before I knew thy face. — Heaven bless thee, Boy!
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes; it should be so — yes — yes —
I knew that thou couldst never have a wish
To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to me
Only by links of love: when thou art gone,
What will be left to us! — But, I forget
My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear
And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
Mayst bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well —
When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here: a covenant
'T will be between us — But, whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave.'

The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped down,
And, as his Father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheep-fold. At the sight
The old Man's grief broke from him; to his heart
He pressed his Son, he kissèd him and wept;
And to the house together they returned.
Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,
Ere the night fell; — with morrow's dawn the Boy
Began his journey, and when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face;
And all the neighbors as he passed their doors
Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight.

A good report did from their Kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well doing: and the Boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout
'The prettiest letters that were ever seen.'
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on: and once again
The Shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the sheep-fold. Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty; and at length

He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'T will make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart:
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the old Man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud
And listened to the wind; and as before
Performed all kinds of labor for his sheep,
And for the land, his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the fold of which
His flock had need. 'T is not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old Man — and 't is believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheep-fold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years from time to time
He at the building of this Sheep-fold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.
Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her Husband: at her death the estate
Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
The cottage which was named the Evening Star
Is gone — the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighborhood: — yet the oak is left
That grew beside their door; and the remains
Of the unfinished Sheep-fold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head Ghyll.

(1800)

MY HEART LEAPS UP WHEN I BEHOLD

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now, I am a man:
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

(1807)

THE SPARROW'S NEST

Behold, within the leafy shade,
Those bright blue eggs together laid!
On me the chance-discovered sight
Gleamed like a vision of delight.
I started — seeming to espy
The home and sheltered bed,—
The Sparrow's dwelling, which, hard by,
My Father's house, in wet or dry,
My sister Emmeline and I
Together visited.
She looked at it, and seemed to fear it;
Dreading, tho' wishing to be near it:

Such heart was in her, being then
A little Prattler among men.
The Blessing of my later years
Was with me when a boy:
She gave me eyes, she gave me ears;
And humble cares, and delicate fears;
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears;
And love, and thought, and joy.

(1807)

TO THE CUCKOO

O blithe New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear;
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessed Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place;
That is fit home for Thee!

(1807)

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

There was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods:
Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods;
The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters;
And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of waters.

All things that love the sun are out of doors:
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;
The grass is bright with rain-drops; — on the moors
The hare is running races in her mirth;
And with her feet she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist; that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

I was a Traveler then upon the moor;
I saw the hare that raced about with joy;
I heard the woods and distant waters roar,
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy:
The pleasant season did my heart employ:
My old remembrances went from me wholly;
And all the ways of men so vain and melancholy!

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might
Of joy in minds that can no further go,
As high as we have mounted in delight
In our dejection do we sink as low,
To me that morning did it happen so;
And fears, and fancies, thick upon me came;
Dim sadness — and blind thoughts, I knew not, nor could name.

I heard the sky-lark warbling in the sky;
And I bethought me of the playful hare:
Even such a happy child of earth am I;
Even as these blissful creatures do I fare;
Far from the world I walk, and from all care;
But there may come another day to me —
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,
As if life's business were a summer mood;
As if all needful things would come unsought
To genial faith, still rich in genial good;
But how can He expect that others should
Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all?

I thought of Chatterton, the marvelous Boy,
The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride;
Of Him who walked in glory and in joy
Following his plough, along the mountain-side:
By our own spirits are we deified:
We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof come in the end despondency and madness.

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace,
A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befell, that, in this lonely place,
When I with these untoward thoughts had striven,
Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven
I saw a Man before me unawares:
The oldest man he seemed that ever wore gray hairs.
As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence;
Wonder to all who do the same espy,

By what means it could thither come, and whence;
So that it seems a thing endued with sense:
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself;

Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor dead,
Nor all asleep — in his extreme old age:
His body was bent double, feet and head
Coming together in life's pilgrimage;
As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
A more than human weight upon his frame had cast.

Himself he propped, limbs, body, and pale face,
Upon a long gray staff of shaven wood:
And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
Upon the margin of that moorish flood
Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood;
That heareth not the loud winds when they call;
And moveth altogether, if it move at all.

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look
Upon the muddy water, which he conned,
As if he had been reading in a book:
And now a stranger's privilege I took;
And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
'This morning gives us promise of a glorious day.'

A gentle answer did the old Man make,
In courteous speech which forth he slowly drew:
And him with further words I thus bespake,
'What occupation do you there pursue?
This is a lonesome place for one like you.'
Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise
Broke from the sable orbs of his yet vivid eyes.

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
But each in solemn order followed each,
With something of a lofty utterance drest;
Choice word, and measured phrase, above the reach
Of ordinary men; a stately speech;
Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,
Religious men, who give to God and man their dues.

He told, that to these waters he had come
To gather leeches, being old and poor:
Employment hazardous and wearisome!
And he had many hardships to endure:
From pond to pond he roamed, from moor to moor;
Housing, with God's good help, by choice or chance;
And in this way he gained an honest maintenance.

The old Man still stood talking by my side;
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarce heard; nor word from word could I divide;
And the whole body of the man did seem
Like one whom I had met with in a dream;
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt admonishment.

My former thoughts returned: the fear that kills;
And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
Cold, pain and labor, and all fleshly ills;
And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
My question eagerly did I renew,
'How is it that you live, and what is it you do?'

He with a smile did then his words repeat;
And said, that, gathering leeches, far and wide
He traveled; stirring thus about his feet
The waters of the pools where they abide.
'Once I could meet with them on every side;
But they have dwindled long by slow decay;
Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may.'

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
The old Man's shape, and speech, all troubled me:
In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
About the weary moors continually,
Wandering about alone and silently.
While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
He, having made a pause, the same discourse renewed.

And soon with this he other matter blended,
Cheerfully uttered, with demeanor kind,
But stately in the main; and when he ended,
I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.
'God,' said I, 'be my help and stay secure,
I'll think of the leech-gatherer on the lonely moor!'

(1807)

TO A YOUNG LADY

WHO HAD BEEN REPROACHED FOR TAKING LONG WALKS IN THE COUNTRY

Dear child of nature, let them rail!
There is a nest in a green dale,
A harbor and a hold,
Where thou, a Wife and Friend, shalt see
Thy own heart-stirring days, and be
A light to young and old.

There, healthy as a shepherd-boy,
And treading among flowers of joy,
Which at no season fade,
Thou, while thy babes around thee cling,
Shalt show us how divine a thing
A Woman may be made.

Thy thoughts and feelings shall not die,
Nor leave thee when gray hairs are nigh,
A melancholy slave;
But an old age serene and bright,
And lovely as a Lapland night,
Shall lead thee to thy grave.

(1807)

THE SOLITARY REAPER

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travelers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

(1807)

YARROW UNVISITED

See the various Poems the scene of which is laid upon the Banks of the Yarrow; in particular, the exquisite Ballad of Hamilton, beginning:

'Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny bride,
Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome Marrow!

From Sterling Castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unraveled.
Had trod the banks of Clyde, and Tay,
And with the Tweed had traveled:
And when we came to Clovenford,
Then said my *winsome Marrow*,
'Whate'er betide, we'll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow.

'Let Yarrow folk, *frae* Selkirk town,
Who have been buying, selling,
Go back to Yarrow, 't is their own;
Each maiden to her dwelling!
On Yarrow's banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow!
But we will downward with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

'There's Gala Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us;
And Dryburgh, where with chiming Tweed
The lintwhites sing in chorus;
There's pleasant Teviotdale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow:
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow?

'What's Yarrow but a river bare,
That glides the dark hills under?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder.'
Strange words they seemed of slight and scorn:
My True love sighed for sorrow:
And looked me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow!

'Oh! green,' said I, 'are Yarrow's holms,
And sweet is Yarrow flowing!
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,[1]

[1] See Hamilton's ballad, as above.

But we will leave it growing.
O'er hilly path, and open Strath,
We 'll wander Scotland thorough;
But, though so near, we will not turn
Into the dale of Yarrow.

'Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow;
The swan on still St. Mary's Lake
Float double, swan and shadow!
We will not see them; will not go,
To-day, nor yet to-morrow;
Enough if in our hearts we know
There 's such a place as Yarrow.

'Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!
It must, or we shall rue it:
We have a vision of our own;
Ah! why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We 'll keep them, winsome Marrow!
For when we 're there, although 't is fair,
'T will be another Yarrow!

'If Care, with freezing years should come,
And wandering seem but folly,—
Should we be loath to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy;
Should life be dull, and spirits low,
'T will soothe us in our sorrow,
That earth has something yet to show,
The bonny holms of Yarrow!'

(1807)

SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT

She was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;
Like Twilight's too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food:
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
A Traveler between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill,
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.

(1807)

I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:—
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company:
I gazed — and gazed — but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought.

For oft when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude,
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

(1807)

TO A SKY-LARK

Up with me! up with me into the clouds!
For thy song, Lark, is strong;
Up with me, up with me into the clouds!
Singing, singing,
With clouds and sky about thee ringing,
Lift me, guide me till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind.

I have walked through wildernesses dreary,
And to-day my heart is weary;
Had I now the wings of a Faery
Up to thee would I fly.
There is madness about thee, and joy divine
In that song of thine;
Lift me, guide me, high and high
To thy banqueting-place in the sky!

Joyous as morning,
Thou art laughing and scorning;
Thou hast a nest for thy love and thy rest,
And, though little troubled with sloth,
Drunken Lark! thou wouldst be loath
To be such a traveler as I.
Happy, happy Liver,
With a soul as strong as a mountain river
Pouring out praise to the almighty Giver,
Joy and jollity be with us both!

Alas! my journey, rugged and uneven,
Through prickly moors or dusty ways must wind;
But hearing thee, or others of thy kind,
As full of gladness and as free of heaven,
I, with my fate contented, will plod on,
And hope for higher raptures, when life's day is done.

(1807)

ELEGIAC STANZAS

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEELE CASTLE IN A STORM PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT

I was thy neighbor once, thou rugged Pile!
Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee:
I saw thee every day; and all the while
Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air;
So like, so very like, was day to day!
Whene'er I looked, thy Image still was there;
It trembled, but it never passed away.

How perfect was the calm! it seemed no sleep;
No mood which season takes away or brings:
I could have fancied that the mighty Deep
Was even the gentlest of all gentle Things.

Ah! then, if mine had been the Painter's hand,
To express what then I saw; and add the gleam
The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration and the Poet's dream;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile!
Amid a world how different from this!
Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss.

Thou should'st have seemed a treasure-house divine
Of peaceful years; a chronicle of heaven;—
Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A Picture had it been of lasting ease,
Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;
No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,
Such Picture would I at that time have made:
And seen the soul of truth in every part;
A steadfast peace that might not be betrayed.

So once it would have been,—'t is so no more;
I have submitted to a new control:
A power is gone, which nothing can restore;
A deep distress hath humanized my Soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold
A smiling sea, and be what I have been:
The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old;
This, which I know, I speak with mind serene.

Then, Beaumont, Friend! who would have been the Friend,
If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore,
This work of thine I blame not, but commend;
This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

Oh, 't is a passionate Work!—yet wise and well;
Well chosen is the spirit that is here;
That Hulk which labors in the deadly swell,
This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear!

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves,
Cased in the unfeeling armor of old time
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves.

Farewell, farewell, the heart that lives alone,
Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind!
Such happiness, wherever it be known,
Is to be pitied; for 't is surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sights of what is to be borne!
Such sights, or worse, as are before me here.—
Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.

(1807)

ODE TO DUTY

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love,
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth;
Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot;
Who do thy work, and know it not:
O if through confidence misplaced they fail,
Thy saving arms, dread Power! around them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust:
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds;
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live!

(1807)

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR

Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought:
Whose high endeavors are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care;
Who doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves,
Of their bad influence, and their good receives;

By objects, which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, rendered more compassionate;
Is placable — because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence, also more alive to tenderness.
'T is he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
To evil for a guard against worse ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He labors good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows;
Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honorable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honors or for worldly state;
Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come at all:
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a Lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a Man inspired;
And, through the heat of conflict keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
Or if an unexpected call succeed,
Come when it will, is equal to the need:
He who though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans
To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes;
Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be,
Are at his heart; and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve;
More brave for this that he hath much to love: —
'T is, finally, the Man, who, lifted high
Conspicuous object in a Nation's eye,
Or left unthought-of in obscurity,—
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not,
Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be won:
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpast:
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall to sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead unprofitable name,
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause:
This is the happy Warrior; this is He
Whom every Man in arms should wish to be.

(1807)

ODE

ON INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

There was a time when meadow, grove and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Appareled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore; —
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.
Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,

And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every Beast keep holiday;—
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy Shepherd-boy!

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,
And the Children are culling
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm:—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
—But there's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And even with something of a Mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely Nurse doth all she can
To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' Darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learned art;
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral,
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little Actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his 'humorous stage'
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy Soul's immensity;
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,

Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

Oh joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest;
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet;
The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober coloring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

(1807)

NUNS FRET NOT AT THEIR CONVENT'S NARROW ROOM

Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room;
And hermits are contented with their cells;
And students with their pensive citadels:
Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,
High as the highest Peak of Furness Fells,
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:
In truth, the prison, unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me,
In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound
Within the sonnet's scanty plot of ground;
Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

(1807)

PERSONAL TALK

I.

I am not One who much or oft delight
To season my fireside with personal talk,—
Of friends, who live within an easy walk,
Or neighbors, daily, weekly, in my sight:
And, for my chance-acquaintance, ladies bright,
Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the stalk,
These all wear out of me, like Forms, with chalk
Painted on rich men's floors for one feast night.
Better than such discourse doth silence long,
Long, barren silence, square with my desire;
To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage-fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whispering its faint undersong.

II.

'Yet life,' you say, 'is life; we have seen and see,
And with a living pleasure we describe;
And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe
The languid mind into activity.
Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth and glee
Are fostered by the comment and the gibe.'
Even be it so, yet still among your tribe,
Our daily world's true Worldlings, rank not me!
Children are blest, and powerful; their world lies
More justly balanced; partly at their feet,
And part far from them — sweetest melodies
Are those that are by distance made more sweet;
Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,
He is a Slave; the meanest we can meet!

III.

Wings have we,— and as far as we can go
We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
There find I personal themes, a plenteous store,
Matter wherein right voluble I am,
To which I listen with a ready ear;
Two shall be named, preëminently dear,—
The gentle Lady married to the Moor;
And heavenly Una with her milk-white Lamb.

IV.

Nor can I not believe but that hereby
Great gains are mine; for thus I live remote
From evil-speaking; rancor, never sought,
Comes to me not; malignant truth, or lie.
Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought:
And thus from day to day my little boat
Rocks in its harbor, lodging peaceably.
Blessings be with them — and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves and nobler cares —
The poets, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!
Oh! might my name be numbered among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

(1807)

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE SEPT. 3 1802

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This city now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theaters, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

(1807)

COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SIDE NEAR CALAIS AUGUST 1802

Fair Star of evening, Splendor of the west,
Star of my Country!—on the horizon's brink
Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink
On England's bosom: yet well pleased to rest,
Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest
Conspicuous to the Nations. Thou, I think,
Shouldst be my Country's emblem; and should'st wink,
Bright Star! with laughter on her banners, drest
In thy fresh beauty. There! that dusky spot
Beneath thee that is England; there she lies.
Blessings be on you both! one hope, one lot,
One life, one glory! I with many a fear
For my dear Country, many heartfelt sighs,
Among men who do not love her, linger here.

(1807)

IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING, CALM AND FREE

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free.
The holy time is quiet as a Nun,
Breathless with adoration: the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the sea;
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year,
And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

(1807)

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC

Once did she hold the gorgeous east in fee;
And was the safeguard of the west: the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest Child of liberty.
She was a maiden City, bright and free;
No guile seduced, no force could violate;
And when she took unto herself a Mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea!
And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay;
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final day:
Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
Of that which once was great, is passed away.

(1807)

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men!
Whether the whistling Rustic tend his plough
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den;
O miserable Chieftain! where and when
Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not! do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee, air, earth, and skies:

There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.
(1807)

SEPTEMBER 1802 NEAR DOVER

Inland, within a hollow vale, I stood;
And saw, while sea was calm and air was clear,
The coast of France, the coast of France how near!
Drawn almost into frightful neighborhood.
I shrunk, for verily the barrier flood
Was like a lake, or river bright and fair,
A span of waters; yet what power is there!
What mightiness for evil and for good!
Even so doth God protect us if we be
Virtuous and wise. Winds blow, and waters roll,
Strength to the brave, and Power, and Deity,
Yet in themselves are nothing! One decree
Spake laws to *them,* and said that by the soul
Only the Nations shall be great and free!
(1807)

LONDON 1802

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee; she is a fen
Of stagnant waters; altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea;
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.
(1807)

IT IS NOT TO BE THOUGHT OF THAT THE FLOOD

It is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, 'with pomp of waters unwithstood,'
Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
That this most famous Stream in bogs and sands
Should perish; and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
Armory of the invincible knights of old:
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakspere spake: the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held. In everything we are sprung
Of earth's first blood, have titles manifold.
(1807)

WHEN I HAVE BORNE IN MEMORY WHAT HAS TAMED

When I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts depart
When men change swords for ledgers and desert
The student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed
I had, my Country! — am I to be blamed?
Now when I think of thee, and what thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
For dearly must we prize thee; we who find
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men;
And I by my affection was beguiled.
What wonder if a Poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a lover or a child!
(1807)

TO THE MEN OF KENT OCTOBER 1803

Vanguard of Liberty, ye men of Kent,
Ye children of a soil that doth advance
Her haughty brow against the coast of France,
Now is the time to prove your hardiment!
To France be words of invitation sent!
They from their fields can see the countenance
Of your fierce war, may ken the glittering lance

And hear you shouting forth your brave intent.
Left single, in bold parley, ye of yore,
Did from the Norman win a gallant wreath;
Confirmed the charters that were yours before;—
No parleying now! In Britain is one breath;
We all are with you now from shore to shore:
Ye men of Kent, 'tis victory or death!
(1807)

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND

Two Voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty Voice:
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven.
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft;
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee!
(1807)

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

The world is too much with us: late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I 'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.
(1807)

AFTER-THOUGHT TO THE RIVER DUDDON

I thought of Thee, my partner and my guide,
As being past away. Vain sympathies!
For, backward, Duddon! as I cast my eyes,
I see what was, and is, and will abide;
Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever glide;
The Form remains, the Function never dies;
While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
We Men, who in our morn of youth defied
The elements, must vanish;—be it so!
Enough, if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
And if, as towards the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know.
(1820)

INSIDE OF KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL CAMBRIDGE

Tax not the royal saint with vain expense,
With ill-matched aims the Architect who planned,
Albeit laboring for a scanty band
Of white-robed Scholars only, this immense
And glorious Work of fine intelligence!
Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more;
So deemed the man who fashioned for the sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering—and wandering on as loath to die;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality.
(1822)

CONTINUED

They dreamt not of a perishable home
Who thus could build. Be mine, in hours of fear
Or groveling thought, to seek a refuge here;
Or through the aisles of Westminster to roam;
Where bubbles burst, and folly's dancing foam
Melts, if it cross the threshold; where the wreath
Of awe-struck wisdom droops: or let my path
Lead to that younger Pile, whose sky-like dome
Hath typified by reach of daring art
Infinity's embrace; whose guardian crest,
The silent Cross, among the stars shall spread
As now, when She hath also seen her breast
Filled with mementos, satiate with its part
Of grateful England's overflowing Dead.

(1822)

ON THE DEPARTURE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT FROM ABBOTSFORD FOR NAPLES

A trouble not of clouds, or weeping rain,
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light
Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height:
Spirits of Power, assembled there, complain
For kindred Power departing from their sight;
While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a blithe strain,
Saddens his voice again, and yet again.
Lift up your hearts, ye Mourners! for the might
Of the whole world's good wishes with him goes;
Blessings and prayers in nobler retinue
Than sceptered King or laureled Conqueror knows,
Follow this wondrous Potentate. Be true,
Ye winds of ocean, and the midland sea,
Wafting your Charge to soft Parthenope!

(1835)

'THERE!' SAID A STRIPLING, POINTING WITH MEET PRIDE

'There!' said a Stripling, pointing with meet pride
Towards a low roof with green trees half concealed,
'Is Mossgiel Farm; and that's the very field
Where Burns ploughed up the Daisy.' Far and wide
A plain below stretched sea-ward, while, descried
Above sea-clouds, the Peaks of Arran rose;
And, by that simple notice, the repose
Of earth, sky, sea, and air, was vivified.
Beneath 'the random *bield* of clod or stone'
Myriads of daisies have shone forth in flower
Near the lark's nest, and in their natural hour
Have passed away, less happy than the One
That by the unwilling ploughshare died to prove
The tender charm of Poetry and Love.

(1835)

CONCLUSION

Most sweet it is with unuplifted eyes
To pace the ground if path be there or none,
While a fair region round the traveler lies,
Which he forbears again to look upon;
Pleased rather with some soft ideal scene,
The work of Fancy or some happy tone
Of meditation, slipping in between
The beauty coming and the beauty gone.
If Thought and Love desert us, from that day
Let us break off all commerce with the Muse;
With Thought and Love companions of our way,
Whate'er the senses take or may refuse
The Mind's internal heaven shall shed her dews
Of inspiration on the humblest lay.

(1835)

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772–1834)

Coleridge was the son of a Devonshire clergyman, about whose eccentricities some amusing stories are told. As a 'poor, friendless boy' he came to London at the age of ten, and entered Christ's Hospital, the famous charity school founded by Edward VI, at the same time as Charles Lamb, with whom he struck up a friendship which lasted as long as they lived. Coleridge was a dreamy, precocious youth, who talked neo-platonism and recited Homer and Pindar in Greek in the play ground. In 1791 he was admitted as a 'sizar' or poor student at Jesus College, Cambridge, which he left in his second year, encumbered with debt and disappointed in love, to enlist in a dragoon regiment under the name of Silas Tomkyn Cumberback. As he could not ride or clean his horse and accoutrements, he proved unsuccessful as a cavalry soldier, and after four months was sent back to the university. He left Cambridge without a degree in 1795, having already formed with Southey, who was at Oxford, the design of the Pantisocracy, an ideal community to be founded on the banks of the Susquehanna by twelve gentlemen and twelve ladies of good education and liberal principles. Southey and Coleridge did not go to America, but they married the two Miss Frickers, who were to have been their partners in the adventure. Mrs. Coleridge complained that her husband 'would walk up and down composing poetry when he ought to have been in bed,' and the union proved an ill-assorted one, but as Coleridge brought his bride to a cottage near Bristol unfurnished with groceries or kitchen ware, the fault was not entirely on her side. Coleridge was all his life terribly impractical, as his own story of the publication of *The Watchman* at this time, given below, abundantly shows. In the same year (1796) Coleridge made the acquaintance of Wordsworth, and the two poets formed a strong friendship, based upon mutual affection, admiration, and reverence. Wordsworth thought Coleridge 'the only wonderful man he had ever met;' Coleridge said of Wordsworth, 'I feel myself a little man by his side.' The two poets were very different in appearance and disposition. Wordsworth's tall, gaunt frame, his high ascetic forehead, stately expression and reserved manner contrasted sharply with Coleridge's stockish figure, awkward gait, and good-natured face with curly black hair and ardent gray eyes. For more than a year (1797–8) the two poets were constantly together, and their communion resulted, not only in the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*, as already related (p. 503), but in the permanent enrichment of each poetic nature by contact with another, richly though differently endowed. After transitory appearances as a Unitarian minister and a London journalist, Coleridge returned from his studies in Germany to publish his translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein* (1800) and to establish his family at Greta Hall, Keswick, a few miles from the Wordsworths. His lack of will power was increased by the habit of taking laudanum, which became fixed in 1803, and grew upon him to an alarming extent. Lamb described him in 1806 as 'an archangel, a little damaged'; a less humorous account says he was 'ill, penniless, and worse than homeless.' Another attempt at periodical publication, *The Friend* (1809), was no better managed, and no more successful than *The Watchman*. His lectures in London, begun about the same time, were more profitable, both to himself and to the public, in spite of his habit of lecturing on anything but the subject announced, and his occasional failure to come at all; the scattered notes he left behind contain some most valuable contributions to Shaksperean criticism. Unable to break himself of the opium habit, Coleridge in 1816 put himself under the care of Dr. Gillman, of Highgate, a London suburb, with whom he lived until his death. His poetic productivity had practically ceased years before, but he continued to write prose (*Biographia Literaria*, 1817; *Aids to Reflection*, 1825), and to pour forth the flood of impassioned and philosophical talk he had begun as a school boy at Christ's Hospital. Some of it is preserved in *Table Talk*, published after his death.

Coleridge had all the powers of a great poet except the ordinary virtues of concentration and continuity of purpose. The only great poem he succeeded in completing was the *Ancient Mariner*, on which he worked under the spur of Wordsworth's influence. He projected innumerable literary undertakings, most of which were not even begun. Yet his influence in producing what a modern critic has called 'the renascence of wonder' was as revolutionary as that of Wordsworth in another way, and if the change in poetry is rightly named 'the romantic revival,' Coleridge must be given a place by the side of his greater friend and fellow poet as one of the makers of the new era.

BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA

FROM CHAPTER X

An imprudent man of common goodness of heart cannot but wish to turn even his imprudences to the benefit of others, as far as this is possible. If therefore any one of the readers of this semi-narrative should be preparing or intending a periodical work, I warn him, in the first place, against trusting in the number of names on his subscription list. For he cannot be certain that the names were put down by sufficient authority; or, should that be ascertained, it still remains to be known, whether they were not extorted by some over zealous friend's importunity; whether the subscriber had not yielded his name, merely from want of courage to answer, no; and with the intention of dropping the work as soon as possible. One gentleman procured me nearly a hundred names for *The Friend,* and not only took frequent opportunity to remind me of his success in his canvass, but labored to impress my mind with the sense of the obligation, I was under to the subscribers; for, (as he very pertinently admonished me,) 'fifty-two shillings a year was a large sum to be bestowed on one individual, where there were so many objects of charity with strong claims to the assistance of the benevolent.' Of these hundred patrons ninety threw up the publication before the fourth number, without any notice; though it was well known to them, that in consequence of the distance, and the slowness and irregularity of the conveyance, I was compelled to lay in a stock of stamped paper for at least eight weeks beforehand; each sheet of which stood me in five pence previously to its arrival at my printer's; though the subscription money was not to be received till the twenty-first week after the commencement of the work; and lastly, though it was in nine cases out of ten impracticable for me to receive the money for two or three numbers without paying an equal sum for the postage.

In confirmation of my first caveat, I will select one fact among many. On my list of subscribers, among a considerable number of names equally flattering, was that of an Earl of Cork, with his address. He might as well have been an Earl of Bottle, for aught I knew of him, who had been content to reverence the peerage *in abstracto,* rather than *in concretis.* Of course *The Friend* was regularly sent as far, if I remember right, as the eighteenth number; that is, till a fortnight before the subscription was to be paid. And lo! just at this time I received a letter from his lordship, reproving me in language far more lordly than courteous for my impudence in directing my pamphlets to him, who knew nothing of me or my work! Seventeen or eighteen numbers of which, however, his lordship was pleased to retain, probably for the culinary or post-culinary conveniences of his servants.

Secondly, I warn all others from the attempt to deviate from the ordinary mode of publishing a work by the trade. I thought indeed, that to the purchaser it was indifferent, whether thirty per cent. of the purchase-money went to the booksellers or to the government; and that the convenience of receiving the work by the post at his own door would give the preference to the latter. It is hard, I own, to have been laboring for years, in collecting and arranging the materials; to have spent every shilling that could be spared after the necessaries of life had been furnished, in buying books, or in journeys for the purpose of consulting them or of acquiring facts at the fountain head; then to buy the paper, pay for the printing, and the like, all at least fifteen per cent. beyond what the trade would have paid; and then after all to give thirty per cent. not of the net profits, but of the gross results of the sale, to a man who has merely to give the books shelf or warehouse room, and permit his apprentice to hand them over the counter to those who may ask for them; and this too copy by copy, although, if the work be on any philosophical or scientific subject, it may be years before the edition is sold off. All this, I confess, must seem a hardship, and one, to which the products of industry in no other mode of exertion are subject. Yet even this is better, far better, than to attempt in any way to unite the functions of author and publisher. But the most prudent mode is to sell the copyright, at least of one or more editions, for the most that the trade will offer. By few only

can a large remuneration be expected; but fifty pounds and ease of mind are of more real advantage to a literary man, than the chance of five hundred with the certainty of insult and degrading anxieties. I shall have been grievously misunderstood, if this statement should be interpreted as written with the desire of detracting from the character of booksellers or publishers. The individuals did not make the laws and customs of their trade, but, as in every other trade, take them as they find them. Till the evil can be proved to be removable, and without the substitution of an equal or greater inconvenience, it were neither wise nor manly even to complain of it. But to use it as a pretext for speaking, or even for thinking, or feeling, unkindly or opprobriously of the tradesmen, as individuals, would be something worse than unwise or even than unmanly; it would be immoral and calumnious. My motives point in a far different direction and to far other objects, as will be seen in the conclusion of the chapter.

A learned and exemplary old clergyman, who many years ago went to his reward followed by the regrets and blessings of his flock, published at his own expense two volumes octavo, entitled, *A New Theory of Redemption.* The work was most severely handled in *The Monthly* or *Critical Review,* I forget which; and this unprovoked hostility became the good old man's favorite topic of conversation among his friends. Well! (he used to exclaim,) in the second edition, I shall have an opportunity of exposing both the ignorance and the malignity of the anonymous critic. Two or three years however passed by without any tidings from the bookseller, who had undertaken the printing and publication of the work, and who was perfectly at his ease, as the author was known to be a man of large property. At length the accounts were written for; and in the course of a few weeks they were presented by the rider for the house, in person. My old friend put on his spectacles, and holding the scroll with no very firm hand, began—'*Paper, so much:* O moderate enough—not at all beyond my expectation! *Printing, so much:* well! moderate enough! *Stitching, covers, advertisements, carriage, and so forth, so much.*'—Still nothing amiss. *Selleridge* (for orthography is no necessary part of a bookseller's literary acquirements) £3. 3*s.* 'Bless me! only three guineas for the what d'ye call it—the *selleridge?*' 'No more, sir!' replied the rider. 'Nay, but that is *too* moderate!' rejoined my old friend. 'Only three guineas for *selling* a thousand copies of a work in two volumes?' 'O sir!' (cries the young traveler) 'you have mistaken the word. There have been none of them *sold;* they have been sent back from London long ago; and this £3. 3*s.* is for the *cellaridge,* or warehouse-room in our book cellar.' The work was in consequence preferred from the ominous cellar of the publisher's to the author's garret; and, on presenting a copy to an acquaintance, the old gentleman used to tell the anecdote with great humor and still greater good nature.

With equal lack of worldly knowledge, I was a far more than equal sufferer for it, at the very outset of my authorship. Toward the close of the first year from the time, that in an inauspicious hour I left the friendly cloisters, and the happy grove of quiet, ever honored Jesus College, Cambridge, I was persuaded by sundry philanthropists and Anti-polemists to set on foot a periodical work, entitled *The Watchman,* that according to the general motto of the work, *all might know the truth, and that the truth might make us free!* In order to exempt it from the stamp-tax, and likewise to contribute as little as possible to the supposed guilt of a war against freedom, it was to be published on every eighth day, thirty-two pages, large octavo, closely printed, and price only four-pence. Accordingly with a flaming prospectus,—'*Knowledge is power,*' 'To cry the state of the political atmosphere,'—and so forth, I set off on a tour to the North, from Bristol to Sheffield, for the purpose of procuring customers, preaching by the way in most of the great towns, as a hireless volunteer, in a blue coat and white waistcoat, that not a rag of the woman of Babylon might be seen on me. For I was at that time and long after, though a Trinitarian (that is *ad normam Platonis*) in philosophy, yet a zealous Unitarian in religion; more accurately, I was a Psilanthropist, one of those who

believe our Lord to have been the real son of Joseph, and who lay the main stress on the resurrection rather than on the crucifixion. O! never can I remember those days with either shame or regret. For I was most sincere, most disinterested. My opinions were indeed in many and most important points erroneous; but my heart was single. Wealth, rank, life itself then seemed cheap to me, compared with the interests of what I believed to be the truth, and the will of my Maker. I cannot even accuse myself of having been actuated by vanity; for in the expansion of my enthusiasm I did not think of myself at all.

My campaign commenced at Birmingham; and my first attack was on a rigid Calvinist, a tallow-chandler by trade. He was a tall dingy man, in whom length was so predominant over breadth, that he might almost have been borrowed for a foundry poker. O that face! a face κατ' ἔμφασιν! I have it before me at this moment. The lank, black, twine-like hair, pingui-nitescent, cut in a straight line along the black stubble of his thin gunpowder eye-brows, that looked like a scorched after-math from a last week's shaving. His coat collar behind in perfect unison, both of color and luster, with the coarse yet glib cordage, which I suppose he called his hair, and which with a bend inward at the nape of the neck,— the only approach to flexure in his whole figure,— slunk in behind his waistcoat; while the countenance lank, dark, very hard, and with strong perpendicular furrows, gave me a dim notion of some one looking at me through a used gridiron, all soot, grease, and iron! But he was one of the thorough-bred, a true lover of liberty, and, as I was informed, had proved to the satisfaction of many, that Mr. Pitt was one of the horns of the second beast in *The Revelations*, that *spake as a dragon*. A person, to whom one of my letters of recommendation had been addressed, was my introducer. It was a new event in my life, my first stroke in the new business I had undertaken of an author, yea, and of an author trading on his own account. My companion after some imperfect sentences and a multitude of hums and ha's abandoned the cause of his client; and I commenced an harangue of half an hour to Phileleutheros, the tallow-chandler, varying my notes, through the whole gamut of eloquence, from the ratiocinative to the declamatory, and in the latter from the pathetic to the indignant. I argued, I described, I promised, I prophesied; and beginning with the captivity of nations I ended with the near approach of the millennium, finishing the whole with some of my own verses describing that glorious state out of the Religious Musings:

> ——————— Such delights
> As float to earth, permitted visitants!
> When in some hour of solemn jubilee
> The massive gates of Paradise are thrown
> Wide open, and forth come in fragments wild
> Sweet echoes of unearthly melodies,
> And odors snatched from beds of amaranth,
> And they, that from the crystal river of life
> Spring up on freshened wing, ambrosial gales!

My taper man of lights listened with perseverant and praiseworthy patience, though, as I was afterwards told, on complaining of certain gales that were not altogether ambrosial, it was a melting day with him. 'And what, Sir,' he said, after a short pause, 'might the cost be?' 'Only four-pence,'—(O! how I felt the anti-climax, the abysmal bathos of that four-pence!)—'Only four-pence, Sir, each number, to be published on every eighth day.'—'That comes to a deal of money at the end of a year. And how much, did you say, there was to be for the money?'—'Thirty-two pages, Sir, large octavo, closely printed.'—'Thirty and two pages? Bless me! why except what I does in a family way on the Sabbath, that's more than I ever reads, Sir! all the year round. I am as great a one, as any man in Brummagem, Sir! for liberty and truth and all them sort of things, but as to this,— no offense, I hope, sir,— I must beg to be excused.'

So ended my first canvass: from causes that I shall presently mention, I made but one other application in person. This took place at Manchester to a stately and opulent wholesale dealer in cottons. He took my letter of introduction, and, having perused it, measured me from head

to foot and again from foot to head, and then asked if I had any bill or invoice of the thing. I presented my prospectus to him. He rapidly skimmed and hummed over the first side, and still more rapidly the second and concluding page; crushed it within his fingers and the palm of his hand; then most deliberately and significantly rubbed and smoothed one part against the other; and lastly putting it into his pocket turned his back on me with an '*over-run* with these articles!' and so without another syllable retired into his counting-house. And, I can truly say, to my unspeakable amusement.

This, I have said, was my second and last attempt. On returning baffled from the first, in which I had vainly essayed to repeat the miracle of Orpheus with the Brummagem patriot, I dined with the tradesman who had introduced me to him. After dinner he importuned me to smoke a pipe with him, and two or three other *illuminati* of the same rank. I objected, both because I was engaged to spend the evening with a minister and his friends, and because I had never smoked except once or twice in my lifetime, and then it was herb tobacco mixed with Oronooko. On the assurance, however, that the tobacco was equally mild, and seeing too that it was of a yellow color; — not forgetting the lamentable difficulty, I have always experienced, in saying, 'No,' and in abstaining from what the people about me were doing, — I took half a pipe, filling the lower half of the bowl with salt. I was soon however compelled to resign it, in consequence of a giddiness and distressful feeling in my eyes, which, as I had drunk but a single glass of ale, must, I knew, have been the effect of the tobacco. Soon after, deeming myself recovered, I sallied forth to my engagement; but the walk and the fresh air brought on all the symptoms again, and, I had scarcely entered the minister's drawing-room, and opened a small packet of letters, which he had received from Bristol for me; ere I sank back on the sofa in a sort of swoon rather than sleep. Fortunately I had found just time enough to inform him of the confused state of my feelings, and of the occasion. For here and thus I lay, my face like a wall that is white-washing, deathly pale and with the cold drops of perspiration running down it from my forehead, while one after another there dropped in the different gentlemen, who had been invited to meet, and spend the evening with me, to the number of from fifteen to twenty. As the poison of tobacco acts but for a short time, I at length awoke from insensibility, and looked round on the party, my eyes dazzled by the candles which had been lighted in the interim. By way of relieving my embarrassment one of the gentlemen began the conversation, with 'Have you seen a paper to-day, Mr. Coleridge?' 'Sir,' I replied, rubbing my eyes, 'I am far from convinced, that a christian is permitted to read either newspapers or any other works of merely political and temporary interest.' This remark, so ludicrously inapposite to, or rather, incongruous with, the purpose, for which I was known to have visited Birmingham, and to assist me in which they were all then met, produced an involuntary and general burst of laughter; and seldom indeed have I passed so many delightful hours, as I enjoyed in that room from the moment of that laugh till an early hour the next morning. Never, perhaps, in so mixed and numerous a party have I since heard conversation sustained with such animation, enriched with such variety of information and enlivened with such a flow of anecdote. Both then and afterwards they all joined in dissuading me from proceeding with my scheme; assured me in the most friendly and yet most flattering expressions, that neither was the employment fit for me, nor I fit for the employment. Yet, if I determined on persevering in it, they promised to exert themselves to the utmost to procure subscribers, and insisted that I should make no more applications in person, but carry on the canvass by proxy. The same hospitable reception, the same dissuasion, and, that failing, the same kind exertions in my behalf, I met with at Manchester, Derby, Nottingham, Sheffield, — indeed, at every place in which I took up my sojourn. I often recall with affectionate pleasure the many respectable men who interested themselves for me, a perfect stranger to them, not a few of whom I can still name among my friends. They will bear witness for me how opposite even then my

principles were to those of Jacobinism or even of democracy, and can attest the strict accuracy of the statement which I have left on record in the tenth and eleventh numbers of *The Friend*.

From this rememberable tour I returned with nearly a thousand names on the subscription list of *The Watchman;* yet more than half convinced, that prudence dictated the abandonment of the scheme. But for this very reason I persevered in it; for I was at that period of my life so completely hag-ridden by the fear of being influenced by selfish motives, that to know a mode of conduct to be the dictate of prudence was a sort of presumptive proof to my feelings, that the contrary was the dictate of duty. Accordingly, I commenced the work, which was announced in London by long bills in letters larger than had ever been seen before, and which, I have been informed, for I did not see them myself, eclipsed the glories even of the lottery puffs. But alas! the publication of the very first number was delayed beyond the day announced for its appearance. In the second number an essay against fast days, with a most censurable application of a text from Isaiah for its motto, lost me near five hundred of my subscribers at one blow. In the two following numbers I made enemies of all my Jacobin and democratic patrons; for, disgusted by their infidelity, and their adoption of French morals with French *psilosophy;* and perhaps thinking, that charity ought to begin nearest home; instead of abusing the government and the Aristocrats chiefly or entirely, as had been expected of me, I leveled my attacks at 'modern patriotism,' and even ventured to declare my belief, that whatever the motives of ministers might have been for the sedition, or as it was then the fashion to call them, the *gagging* bills, yet the bills themselves would produce an effect to be desired by all the true friends of freedom, as far as they should contribute to deter men from openly declaiming on subjects, the principles of which they had never bottomed and from 'pleading *to* the poor and ignorant, instead of pleading *for* them.' At the same time I avowed my conviction, that national education and a concurring spread of the Gospel were the indispensable condition of any true political melioration. Thus by the time the seventh number was published, I had the mortification — (but why should I say this, when in truth I cared too little for any thing that concerned my worldly interests to be at all mortified about it?) — of seeing the preceding numbers exposed in sundry old iron shops for a penny a piece. At the ninth number I dropped the work. But from the London publisher I could not obtain a shilling; he was a ——— and set me at defiance. From other places I procured but little, and after such delays as rendered that little worth nothing; and I should have been inevitably thrown into jail by my Bristol printer, who refused to wait even for a month, for a sum between eighty and ninety pounds, if the money had not been paid for me by a man by no means affluent, a dear friend, who attached himself to me from my first arrival at Bristol, who has continued my friend with a fidelity unconquered by time or even by my own apparent neglect; a friend from whom I never received an advice that was not wise, nor a remonstrance that was not gentle and affectionate.

Conscientiously an opponent of the first revolutionary war, yet with my eyes thoroughly opened to the true character and impotence of the favorers of revolutionary principles in England, principles which I held in abhorrence,—(for it was part of my political creed, that whoever ceased to act as an individual by making himself a member of any society not sanctioned by his Government, forfeited the rights of a citizen)—a vehement Anti-Ministerialist, but after the invasion of Switzerland, a more vehement Anti-Gallican, and still more intensely an Anti-Jacobin, I retired to a cottage at Stowey, and provided for my scanty maintenance by writing verses for a London morning paper. I saw plainly, that literature was not a profession, by which I could expect to live; for I could not disguise from myself, that, whatever my talents might or might not be in other respects, yet they were not of the sort that could enable me to become a popular writer, and that whatever my opinions might be in themselves, they were almost equi-distant from all the three prominent parties, the Pittites, the Foxites, and the Democrats. Of the unsal-

able nature of my writings I had an amusing memento one morning from our own servant girl. For happening to rise at an earlier hour than usual, I observed her putting an extravagant quantity of paper into the grate in order to light the fire, and mildly checked her for her wastefulness; 'La, Sir!' (replied poor Nanny) 'why, it is only Watchmen.'

I now devoted myself to poetry and to the study of ethics and psychology; and so profound was my admiration at this time of Hartley's *Essay on Man,* that I gave his name to my first-born. In addition to the gentleman, my neighbor, whose garden joined on to my little orchard, and the cultivation of whose friendship had been my sole motive in choosing Stowey for my residence, I was so fortunate as to acquire, shortly after my settlement there, an invaluable blessing in the society and neighborhood of one, to whom I could look up with equal reverence, whether I regarded him as a poet, a philosopher, or a man. His conversation extended to almost all subjects, except physics and politics; with the latter he never troubled himself. Yet neither my retirement nor my utter abstraction from all the disputes of the day could secure me in those jealous times from suspicion and obloquy, which did not stop at me, but extended to my excellent friend, whose perfect innocence was even adduced as a proof of his guilt. One of the many busy sycophants of that day,— (I here use the word sycophant in its original sense, as a wretch who *flatters* the prevailing party by *informing* against his neighbors, under pretence that they are exporters of prohibited *figs* or fancies, — for the moral application of the term it matters not which) — one of these sycophantic law-mongrels, discoursing on the politics of the neighborhood, uttered the following deep remark: 'As to Coleridge, there is not so much harm in *him,* for he is a whirl-brain that talks whatever come uppermost; but that ——! he is the *dark* traitor. *You never hear* HIM *say a syllable on the subject.*'

* * *

The dark guesses of some zealous *Quidnunc* met with so congenial a soil in the grave alarm of a titled Dogberry of our neighborhood, that a spy was actually sent down from the government *pour surveillance* of myself and friend. There must have been not only abundance, but variety of those 'honorable men' at the disposal of Ministers; for this proved a very honest fellow. After three weeks' truly Indian perseverance in tracking us, (for we were commonly together,) during all which time seldom were we out of doors, but he contrived to be within hearing,— and all the while utterly unsuspected; how indeed *could* such a suspicion enter our fancies? — he not only rejected Sir Dogberry's request that he would try yet a little longer, but declared to him his belief, that both my friend and myself were as good subjects, for aught he could discover to the contrary, as any in His Majesty's dominions. He had repeatedly hid himself, he said, for hours together behind a bank at the sea-side, (our favorite seat,) and overheard our conversation. At first he fancied, that we were aware of our danger; for he often heard me talk of one *Spy Nozy,* which he was inclined to interpret of himself, and of a remarkable feature belonging to him; but he was speedily convinced that it was the name of a man who had made a book and lived long ago. Our talk ran most upon books, and we were perpetually desiring each other to look at *this,* and to listen to *that;* but he could not catch a word about politics. Once he had joined me on the road; (this occurred, as I was returning home alone from my friend's house, which was about three miles from my own cottage,) and, passing himself off as a traveler, he had entered into conversation with me, and talked of purpose in a democrat way in order to draw me out. The result, it appears, not only convinced him that I was no friend of Jacobinism; but, (he added,) I had 'plainly made it out to be such a silly as well as wicked thing, that he felt ashamed though he had only *put it on.*' I distinctly remembered the occurrence, and had mentioned it immediately on my return, repeating what the traveler with his Bardolph nose had said, with my own answer; and so little did I suspect the true object of my 'tempter ere accuser,' that I expressed with no small pleasure my hope and belief that the conversation had been of some service to the poor misled malcontent. This incident

therefore prevented all doubt as to the truth of the report, which through a friendly medium came to me from the master of the village inn, who had been ordered to entertain the Government gentleman in his best manner, but above all to be silent concerning such a person being in his house. At length he received Sir Dogberry's commands to accompany his guest at the final interview; and, after the absolving suffrage of the *gentleman honored with the confidence of Ministers,* answered, as follows, to the following queries: D. Well, landlord! and what do you know of the person in question? L. I see him often pass by with maister ———, my landlord, (*that is, the owner of the house,*) and sometimes with the new-comers at Holford; but I never said a word to him or he to me. D. But do you not know, that he has distributed papers and hand-bills of a seditious nature among the common people? L. No, your Honor! I never heard of such a thing. D. Have you not seen this Mr. Coleridge, or heard of, his haranguing and talking to knots and clusters of the inhabitants? — What are you grinning at, sir? L. Beg your Honor's pardon! but I was only thinking, how they'd have stared at him. If what I have heard be true, your Honor! they would not have understood a word he said. When our Vicar was here, Dr. L. the master of the great school and Canon of Windsor, there was a great dinner party at maister ———'s; and one of the farmers, that was there, told us that he and the Doctor talked real Hebrew Greek at each other for an hour together after dinner. D. Answer the question, sir! does he ever harangue the people? L. I hope your Honor ain't angry with me. I can say no more than I know. I never saw him talking with any one, but my landlord, and our curate, and the strange gentleman. D. Has he not been seen wandering on the hills towards the Channel, and along the shore, with books and papers in his hand, taking charts and maps of the country? L. Why, as to that, your Honor! I own, I have heard; I am sure, I would not wish to say ill of any body; but it is certain, that I have heard — D. Speak out, man! don't be afraid, you are doing your duty to your King and Government. What have you heard? L. Why, folks do say, your Honor! as how that he is a *Poet,* and that he is going to put Quantock and all about here in print; and as they be so much together, I suppose that the strange gentleman has some *consarn* in the business.— So ended this formidable inquisition, the latter part of which alone requires explanation, and at the same time entitles the anecdote to a place in my literary life. I had considered it as a defect in the admirable poem of *The Task,* that the subject, which gives the title to the work, was not, and indeed could not be, carried on beyond the three or four first pages, and that, throughout the poem, the connections are frequently awkward, and the transitions abrupt and arbitrary. I sought for a subject that should give equal room and freedom for description, incident, and impassioned reflections on men, nature, and society, yet supply in itself a natural connection to the parts, and unity to the whole. Such a subject I conceived myself to have found in a stream, traced from its source in the hills among the yellow-red moss and conical glass-shaped tufts of bent, to the first break or fall, where its drops become audible, and it begins to form a channel; thence to the peat and turf barn, itself built of the same dark squares as it sheltered; to the sheepfold; to the first cultivated plot of ground; to the lonely cottage and its bleak garden won from the heath; to the hamlet, the villages, the market-town, the manufactories, and the seaport. My walks therefore were almost daily on top of Quantock, and among its sloping coombes. With my pencil and memorandum-book in my hand, I was *making studies,* as the artists call them, and often moulding my thoughts into verse, with the objects and imagery immediately before my senses. Many circumstances, evil and good, intervened to prevent the completion of the poem, which was to have been entitled *The Brook.* Had I finished the work, it was my purpose in the heat of the moment to have dedicated it to our then committee of public safety as containing the charts and maps, with which I was to have supplied the French Government in aid of their plans of invasion. And thes-

too for a tract of coast that, from Clevedon to Minehead, scarcely permits the approach of a fishing-boat!

CHAPTER XIV

During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbors, our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colors of imagination. The sudden charm, which accidents of light and shade, which moonlight or sunset, diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both. These are the poetry of nature. The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions, as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real in this sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency. For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life; the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them when they present themselves.

In this idea originated the plan of the *Lyrical Ballads;* in which it was agreed that my endeavors should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude, we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand.

With this view I wrote the *Ancient Mariner,* and was preparing, among other poems, the *Dark Ladie,* and the *Christabel,* in which I should have more nearly realized my ideal than I had done in my first attempt. But Mr. Wordsworth's industry had proved so much more successful, and the number of his poems so much greater, that my compositions, instead of forming a balance, appeared rather an interpolation of heterogeneous matter. Mr. Wordsworth added two or three poems written in his own character, in the impassioned, lofty, and sustained diction which is characteristic of his genius. In this form the *Lyrical Ballads* were published; and were presented by him, as an experiment, whether subjects, which from their nature rejected the usual ornaments and extra-colloquial style of poems in general, might not be so managed in the language of ordinary life as to produce the pleasurable interest which it is the peculiar business of poetry to impart. To the second edition he added a preface of considerable length; in which, notwithstanding some passages of apparently a contrary import, he was understood to contend for the extension of this style to poetry of all kinds, and to reject as vicious and indefensible all phrases and forms of style that were not included in what he (unfortunately, I think, adopting an equivocal expression) called the language of real life. From this preface prefixed to poems in which it was impossible to deny the presence of original genius, however mistaken its direction might be deemed, arose the whole long-continued controversy. For from the conjunction of perceived power with supposed heresy I explain the inveteracy, and in some instances, I grieve to say, the acrimonious passions, with which the controversy has been conducted by the assailants.

Had Mr. Wordsworth's poems been the silly, the childish things which they were for a long time described as being; had they been really distinguished from the

compositions of other poets merely by meanness of language, and inanity of thought; had they indeed contained nothing more than what is found in the parodies and pretended imitations of them; they must have sunk at once, a dead weight, into the slough of oblivion, and have dragged the preface along with them. But year after year increased the number of Mr. Wordsworth's admirers. They were found, too, not in the lower classes of the reading public, but chiefly among young men of strong sensibility and meditative minds; and their admiration (inflamed perhaps in some degree by opposition) was distinguished by its intensity, I might almost say, by its religious fervor. These facts, and the intellectual energy of the author, which was more or less consciously felt, where it was outwardly and even boisterously denied, meeting with sentiments of aversion to his opinions, and of alarm at their consequences, produced an eddy of criticism, which would of itself have borne up the poems by the violence with which it whirled them round and round. With many parts of this preface, in the sense attributed to them, and which the words undoubtedly seem to authorize, I never concurred; but, on the contrary, objected to them as erroneous in principle, and as contradictory (in appearance at least) both to other parts of the same preface and to the author's own practice in the greater number of the poems themselves. Mr. Wordsworth, in his recent collection, has, I find, degraded this prefatory disquisition to the end of his second volume, to be read or not at the reader's choice. But he has not, as far as I can discover, announced any change in his poetic creed. At all events, considering it as the source of a controversy, in which I have been honored more than I deserve by the frequent conjunction of my name with his, I think it expedient to declare, once for all, in what points I coincide with his opinions, and in what points I altogether differ. But in order to render myself intelligible, I must previously, in as few words as possible, explain my ideas, first, of a poem; and secondly, of poetry itself, in kind and in essence.

The office of philosophical disquisition consists in just distinction; while it is the privilege of the philosopher to preserve himself constantly aware that distinction is not division. In order to obtain adequate notions of any truth, we must intellectually separate its distinguishable parts; and this is the technical process of philosophy. But having so done, we must then restore them in our conceptions to the unity in which they actually coexist; and this is the result of philosophy. A poem contains the same elements as a prose composition; the difference, therefore, must consist in a different combination of them, in consequence of a different object proposed. According to the difference of the object will be the difference of the combination. It is possible that the object may be merely to facilitate the recollection of any given facts or observations by artificial arrangement; and the composition will be a poem, merely because it is distinguished from prose by meter, or by rime, or by both conjointly. In this, the lowest sense, a man might attribute the name of a poem to the well-known enumeration of the days in the several months:

> Thirty days hath September,
> April, June, and November, etc.

and others of the same class and purpose. And as a particular pleasure is found in anticipating the recurrence of sound and quantities, all compositions that have this charm superadded, whatever be their contents, *may* be entitled poems.

So much for the superficial form. A difference of object and contents supplies an additional ground of distinction. The immediate purpose may be the communication of truths: either of truth absolute and demonstrable, as in works of science; or of facts experienced and recorded, as in history. Pleasure, and that of the highest and most permanent kind, may result from the attainment of the end; but it is not itself the immediate end. In other works the communication of pleasure may be the immediate purpose and though truth, either moral or intellectual, ought to be the ultimate end, yet this will distinguish the character of the author, not the class to which the work belongs. Blest indeed is that state of society, in which the immediate purpose would be baffled by the perversion of the

proper ultimate end; in which no charm of diction or imagery could exempt the Bathyllus even of an Anacreon, or the Alexis of Virgil, from disgust and aversion!

But the communication of pleasure may be the immediate object of a work not metrically composed; and that object may have been in a high degree attained, as in novels and romances. Would then the mere superaddition of meter, with or without rime, entitle these to the name of poems? The answer is, that nothing can permanently please, which does not contain in itself the reason why it is so, and not otherwise. If meter be superadded, all other parts must be made consonant with it. They must be such as to justify the perpetual and distinct attention to each part, which an exact correspondent recurrence of accent and sound are calculated to excite. The final definition then, so deduced, may be thus worded. A poem is that species of composition, which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its immediate object pleasure, not truth; and from all other species (having this object in common with it) it is discriminated by proposing to itself such delight from the whole, as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component part.

Controversy is not seldom excited in consequence of the disputants attaching each a different meaning to the same word; and in few instances has this been more striking than in disputes concerning the present subject. If a man chooses to call every composition a poem, which is rime, or measure, or both, I must leave his opinion uncontroverted. The distinction is at least competent to characterize the writer's intention. If it were subjoined, that the whole is likewise entertaining or affecting as a tale, or as a series of interesting reflections, I of course admit this as another fit ingredient of a poem, and an additional merit. But if the definition sought for be that of a legitimate poem, I answer, it must be one the parts of which mutually support and explain each other; all in their proportion harmonizing with, and supporting the purpose and known influences of metrical arrangement. The philosophic critics of all ages coincide with the ultimate judgment of all countries, in equally denying the praises of a just poem, on the one hand to a series of striking lines or distichs, each of which absorbing the whole attention of the reader to itself, disjoins it from its context, and makes it a separate whole, instead of a harmonizing part; and on the other hand, to an unsustained composition, from which the reader collects rapidly the general result unattracted by the component parts. The reader should be carried forward, not merely or chiefly by the mechanical impulse of curiosity, or by a restless desire to arrive at the final solution; but by the pleasurable activity of mind excited by the attractions of the journey itself. Like the motion of a serpent, which the Egyptians made the emblem of intellectual power; or like the path of sound through the air, at every step he pauses and half recedes, and from the retrogressive movement collects the force which again carries him onward, *Praecipitandus est liber spiritus* [The free spirit must be urged onward], says Petronius Arbiter most happily. The epithet, *liber,* here balances the preceding verb: and it is not easy to conceive more meaning condensed in fewer words.

But if this should be admitted as a satisfactory character of a poem, we have still to seek for a definition of poetry. The writings of Plato, and Bishop Taylor, and the *Theoria Sacra* of Burnet, furnish undeniable proofs that poetry of the highest kind may exist without meter, and even without the contra-distinguishing objects of a poem. The first chapter of Isaiah (indeed a very large proportion of the whole book) is poetry in the most emphatic sense; yet it would be not less irrational than strange to assert, that pleasure, and not truth, was the immediate object of the prophet. In short, whatever specific import we attach to the word poetry, there will be found involved in it, as a necessary consequence, that a poem of any length neither can be, nor ought to be, all poetry. Yet if a harmonious whole is to be produced, the remaining parts must be preserved in keeping with the poetry; and this can be no otherwise effected than by such a studied selection and artificial arrangement as will partake of one, though not a peculiar property of poetry. And this again

can be no other than the property of exciting a more continuous and equal attention than the language of prose aims at, whether colloquial or written.

My own conclusions on the nature of poetry, in the strictest use of the word, have been in part anticipated in the preceding disquisition on the fancy and imagination. What is poetry? is so nearly the same question with, what is a poet? that the answer to the one is involved in the solution of the other. For it is a distinction resulting from the poetic genius itself, which sustains and modifies the images, thoughts, and emotions of the poet's own mind. The poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power, first put in action by the will and understanding, and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed, control (*laxis effertur habenis* [he is borne with loose reins]), reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference; of the general, with the concrete; the idea, with the image; the individual, with the representative; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order; judgment ever awake and steady self-possession, with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement; and while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature; the manner to the matter; and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the poetry. 'Doubtless,' as Sir John Davies observes of the soul (and his words may with slight alteration be applied, and even more appropriately, to the poetic imagination),—

Doubtless this could not be, but that she turns
Bodies to spirit by sublimation strange,
As fire converts to fire, the things it burns,
As we our food into our nature change.
From their gross matter she abstracts their forms,
And draws a kind of quintessence from things;
Which to her proper nature she transforms
To bear them light on her celestial wings.

Thus does she, when from individual states
She doth abstract the universal kinds;
Which then re-clothed in divers names and fates
Steal access through our senses to our minds

Finally, good sense is the body of poetic genius, fancy its drapery, motion its life, and imagination the soul that is everywhere, and in each; and forms all into one graceful and intelligent whole.

(1817)

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

IN SEVEN PARTS

PART I

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
'By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

'The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din.'

He holds him with his skinny hand,
'There was a ship,' quoth he.
'Hold off! unhand me, graybeard loon!'
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

'The ship was cheered, the harbor cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

'The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!

And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

'Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon—'
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner:

'And now the Storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

'With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

'And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold;
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

'And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between.

'The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!

'At length did cross an Albatross:
Thorough the fog it came:
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

'It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through!

And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo!

'In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moon-shine.'

'God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!—
Why look'st thou so?'—'With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross!'

Part II

'The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

'And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day, for food or play,
Came to the mariner's hollo!

'And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe;
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah, wretch! said they, the bird to slay
That made the breeze to blow!

'Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'T was right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

'The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free:
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

'Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'T was sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

'All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

'Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

'Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

'The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

'About, about, in reel and rout,
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue, and white.

'And some in dreams assurèd were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so:
Nine fathom deep he had followed us,
From the land of mist and snow.

'And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

'Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

Part III

'There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! A weary time!
How glazed each weary eye!
When looking westward I beheld
A something in the sky.

'At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist:
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

'A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

'With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, "A sail! a sail!"

'With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

"See! see (I cried) she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!"

'The western wave was all a-flame:
The day was well nigh done:
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

'And straight the Sun was flecked with bars.
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon grate he peered,
With broad and burning face.

'Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres?

'Are those her ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there two?
Is Death that woman's mate?

'Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Nightmare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

'The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
"The game is done! I've won, I've won!"
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

'The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the specter-bark.

'We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!

The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white;
From the sails the dew did drip —
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornèd Moon with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

'One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

'Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

'The souls did from their bodies fly —
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whiz of my cross-bow!'

Part IV

'I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

'I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown.'—
'Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!
This body dropt not down.

'Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

'The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

'I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

'I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky,
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

'The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

'An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

'The moving Moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside —

'Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmèd water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

'Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

'Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

'O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware!
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

'The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

Part V

'Oh, sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

'The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained.

'My lips were wet, my throat was cold.
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

'I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light — almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessèd ghost.

'And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

'The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about;
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

'And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain poured down from one black cloud;
The Moon was at its edge.

'The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

'The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan.

'They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

'The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up-blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do:
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools —
We were a ghastly crew.

'The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee:
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said nought to me.'

'I fear thee, ancient Mariner!'
'Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
'T was not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:

'For when it dawned — they dropped their arms,
And clustered round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

'Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds come back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

'Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the skylark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning!

'And now 't was like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

'It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

'Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

'Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid; and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

'The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean;
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion —
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

'Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swound.

'How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life return'd,
I heard, and in my soul discern'd
Two voices in the air.

'"Is it he?" quoth one, "is this the man?
By Him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

'"The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow."

'The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, "The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do."

Part VI

FIRST VOICE

'"But tell me, tell me! speak again
Thy soft response renewing —
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the ocean doing?"

SECOND VOICE

'"Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast —

'"If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him, smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him."

FIRST VOICE

'"But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?"

SECOND VOICE

'"The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

'"Fly brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated."

'I woke, and we were sailing on,
As in a gentle weather:
'T was night, calm night, the moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

'All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

'The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

'And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen —

'Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round, walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

'But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

'It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring —
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

'Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze —
On me alone it blew.

'Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

'We drifted o'er the harbor-bar,
And I with sobs did pray —
"O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep alway."

'The harbor-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

'The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

'And the bay was white with silent light,
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colors came.

'A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:
I turned my eyes upon the deck—
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

'Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

'This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light:

'This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart—
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

'But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

'The Pilot, and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

'I saw a third—I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He 'll shrieve my soul, he 'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

Part VII

'This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

'He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

'The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
"Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now?"

'"Strange, by my faith!" the Hermit said—
"And they answered not our cheer!
The planks look warped! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

'"Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along:
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young."

'"Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look"—
(The pilot made reply)
"I am a-feared"—"Push on, push on!"
Said the Hermit cheerily.

'The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

'Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead.

'Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned,
My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

'Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

'I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked,
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

'I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
"Ha! ha!" quoth he, "full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row."

'And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

'"O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!"
The Hermit crossed his brow.
"Say quick," quoth he, "I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou?"

'Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woeful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

'Since then at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns;
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

'I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

'What loud uproar bursts from that door:
The wedding-guests are there;
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are;
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!

'O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 't was, that God himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

'O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'T is sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—

'To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

'Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

'He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone; and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man
He rose the morrow morn.

(1798)

CHRISTABEL

Part I

'T is the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awaken'd the crowing cock;
Tu-whit!—Tu-whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.
Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff, which
From her kennel beneath the rock
Maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour;
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark.
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is gray:
'T is a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.
The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late,
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothèd knight;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that 's far away.

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And naught was green upon the oak,
But moss and rarest misletoe:
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel!

It moaned as near, as near can be,
But what it is she cannot tell.—
On the other side it seems to be,
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek—
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Drest in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone:
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck, and arms were bare;
Her blue-veined feet unsandaled were;
And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess, 't was frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she—
Beautiful exceedingly!

'Mary mother, save me now!'
Said Christabel, 'and who art thou?'

The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet:—
'Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness:
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear!'
Said Christabel, 'How camest thou here?'
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet:—
'My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine:
Five warriors seized me yestermorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn:
They choked my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.
The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
And they rode furiously behind.
They spurred amain, their steeds were white:
And once we crossed the shade of night.
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be;
Nor do I know how long it is
(For I have lain entranced, I wis)
Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive.
Some muttered words his comrades spoke:
He placed me underneath this oak;
He swore they would return with haste;
Whither they went I cannot tell—
I thought I heard, some minutes past,
Sounds as of a castle bell.
Stretch forth thy hand,' thus ended she,
'And help a wretched maid to flee.'

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand,
And comforted fair Geraldine:
'O well, bright dame, may you command
The service of Sir Leoline;
And gladly our stout chivalry
Will he send forth, and friends withal,
To guide and guard you safe and free
Home to your noble father's hall.'

She rose: and forth with steps they passed
That strove to be, and were not, fast.
Her gracious stars the lady blest,
And thus spake on sweet Christabel:
'All our household are at rest,
The hall as silent as the cell;
Sir Leoline is weak in health,
And may not well awakened be,
But we will move as if in stealth;
And I beseech your courtesy,
This night, to share your couch with me.'

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little door she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate;
The gate that was ironed within and without,
Where an army in battle array had marched out.
The lady sank, belike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate:
Then the lady rose again,
And moved, as she were not in pain.

So, free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.
And Christabel devoutly cried
To the Lady by her side;
'Praise we the Virgin all divine,
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!'

'Alas, alas!' said Geraldine,
'I cannot speak for weariness.'
So, free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.

Outside her kennel the mastiff old
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.
The mastiff old did not awake,
Yet she an angry moan did make.
And what can ail the mastiff bitch?
Never till now she uttered yell
Beneath the eye of Christabel.
Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch:
For what can ail the mastiff bitch?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,
Pass as lightly as you will.
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
Amid their own white ashes lying;
But when the lady passed, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;
And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
And nothing else saw she thereby,
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.
'O softly tread,' said Christabel,
'My father seldom sleepeth well:'
Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,
And, jealous of the listening air,
They steal their way from stair to stair,
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,
And now they pass the Baron's room,
As still as death, with stifled breath!
And now have reached her chamber door;
And now doth Geraldine press down
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air,
And not a moonbeam enters here.
But they without its light can see
The chamber carved so curiously,
Carved with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain,
For a lady's chamber meet:
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fastened to an angel's feet.
The silver lamp burns dead and dim;
But Christabel the lamp will trim.
She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,
And left it swinging to and fro,
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
Sank down upon the floor below.

O weary lady, Geraldine,
I pray you, drink this cordial wine!
It is a wine of virtuous powers;
My mother made it of wild flowers.'
'And will your mother pity me,
Who am a maiden most forlorn?'
Christabel answered—'Woe is me!
She died the hour that I was born.
I have heard the gray-haired friar tell,
How on her death-bed she did say,
That she should hear the castle-bell
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.
O mother dear! that thou wert here!'
'I would,' said Geraldine, 'she were!'

But soon, with altered voice, said she—
'Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!
I have power to bid thee flee.'
Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
Why stares she with unsettled eye?
Can she the bodiless dead espy?
And why with hollow voice cries she,
'Off, woman, off! this hour is mine—
Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me.'

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue—
'Alas!' said she, 'this ghastly ride—
Dear lady! it hath wildered you!'
The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
And faintly said, ''Tis over now!'
Again the wild-flower wine she drank:
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
And from the floor, whereon she sank,
The lofty lady stood upright:
She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countrée.

And thus the lofty lady spake—
'All they, who live in the upper sky,
Do love you, holy Christabel!
And you love them, and for their sake,
And for the good which me befell,
Even I in my degree will try,
Fair maiden, to requite you well.
But now unrobe yourself; for I
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie.'

Quoth Christabel, 'So let it be!'
And as the lady bade, did she.
Her gentle limbs did she undress
And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain, of weal and woe,
So many thoughts moved to and fro,
That vain it were her lids to close;
So half-way from the bed she rose,
And on her elbow did recline,
To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
And slowly rolled her eyes around;
Then drawing in her breath aloud,
Like one that shuddered, she unbound
The cincture from beneath her breast:
Her silken robe, and inner vest,
Dropt to her feet, and full in view,
Behold! her bosom and half her side—
A sight to dream of, not to tell!
O shield her! shield sweet Christabel!

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs:
Ah! what a stricken look was hers!
Deep from within she seems half-way
To lift some weight with sick assay,
And eyes the maid and seeks delay;
Then suddenly, as one defied,
Collects herself in scorn and pride,
And lay down by the maiden's side!—
And in her arms the maid she took,
Ah, well-a-day!
And with low voice and doleful look
These words did say:

'In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!
Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow,
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;
But vainly thou warrest,
For this is alone in
Thy power to declare,
That in the dim forest
Thou heard'st a low moaning,
And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair:
And didst bring her home with thee, in love and in charity,
To shield her and shelter her from the damp air.'

The Conclusion to Part I

It was a lovely sight to see
The lady Christabel, when she
Was praying at the old oak tree.
Amid the jagged shadows
Of mossy leafless boughs,
Kneeling in the moonlight,
To make her gentle vows;
Her slender palms together prest,
Heaving sometimes on her breast;
Her face resigned to bliss or bale—
Her face, oh, call it fair not pale,
And both blue eyes more bright than clear,
Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah, woe is me!)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
Fearfully dreaming, yet, I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is—
O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,
The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree?
And lo! the worker of these harms,
That holds the maiden in her arms,
Seems to slumber still and mild,
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
O Geraldine! since arms of thine
Have been the lovely lady's prison.
O Geraldine! one hour was thine—
Thou'st had thy will! By tairn and rill,
The night-birds all that hour were still.
But now they are jubilant anew,
From cliff and tower, tu-whoo! tu-whoo!
Tu-whoo! tu-whoo! from wood and fell!

And see! the lady Christabel
Gathers herself from out her trance;
Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds—
Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
And oft the while she seems to smile
As infants at a sudden light!
Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
Like a youthful hermitess,
Beauteous in a wilderness,
Who, praying always, prays in sleep.
And, if she move unquietly,
Perchance, 't is but the blood so free
Comes back and tingles in her feet.
No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.
What if her guardian spirit 't were,
What if she knew her mother near?
But this she knows, in joys and woes,
That saints will aid if men will call:
For the blue sky bends over all.

Part II

Each matin bell, the Baron saith,
Knells us back to a world of death.
These words Sir Leoline first said,
When he rose and found his lady dead:
These words Sir Leoline will say
Many a morn to his dying day!

And hence the custom and law began
That still at dawn the sacristan,
Who duly pulls the heavy bell,
Five and forty beads must tell
Between each stroke—a warning knell,
Which not a soul can choose but hear
From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, 'So let it knell!
And let the drowsy sacristan
Still count as slowly as he can!'
There is no lack of such, I ween,
As well fill up the space between.
In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair,
And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,
With ropes of rock and bells of air
Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,
Who all give back, one after t'other,
The death-note to their living brother;
And oft too, by the knell offended,
Just as their one! two! three! is ended,
The devil mocks the doleful tale
With a merry peal from Borrowdale.

The air is still! through mist and cloud
That merry peal comes ringing loud;
And Geraldine shakes off her dread,
And rises lightly from the bed;
Puts on her silken vestments white,
And tricks her hair in lovely plight,
And nothing doubting of her spell
Awakens the lady Christabel.
'Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel?
I trust that you have rested well.'

And Christabel awoke and spied
The same who lay down by her side—
O rather say, the same whom she
Raised up beneath the old oak tree!
Nay, fairer yet! and yet more fair!
For she belike hath drunken deep
Of all the blessedness of sleep!
And while she spake, her looks, her air,
Such gentle thankfulness declare,
That (so it seemed) her girded vests
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts.
'Sure I have sinned!' said Christabel,
'Now heaven be praised if all be well!'
And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,
Did she the lofty lady greet
With such perplexity of mind
As dreams too lively leave behind.

So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed
Her maiden limbs, and having prayed
That He, who on the cross did groan,
Might wash away her sins unknown,
She forthwith led fair Geraldine
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.
The lovely maid and the lady tall
Are pacing both into the hall,
And pacing on through page and groom,
Enter the Baron's presence-room.

The Baron rose, and while he prest
His gentle daughter to his breast,
With cheerful wonder in his eyes
The lady Geraldine espies,
And gave such welcome to the same,
As might beseem so bright a dame!

But when he heard the lady's tale,
And when she told her father's name,
Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale,
Murmuring o'er the name again,
Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?
Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanced, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted—ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining—
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between.
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.
Sir Leoline, a moment's space,
Stood gazing on the damsel's face:
And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine
Came back upon his heart again.

O then the Baron forgot his age,
His noble heart swelled high with rage;
He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side
He would proclaim it far and wide,
With trump and solemn heraldry,
That they, who thus had wronged the dame
Were base as spotted infamy!
'And if they dare deny the same,
My herald shall appoint a week,
And let the recreant traitors seek
My tourney court—that there and then
I may dislodge their reptile souls
From the bodies and forms of men!'
He spake: his eye in lightning rolls!
For the lady was ruthlessly seized; and he kenned
In the beautiful lady the child of his friend!

And now the tears were on his face,
And fondly in his arms he took
Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace,
Prolonging it with joyous look.
Which when she viewed, a vision fell
Upon the soul of Christabel,
The vision of fear, the touch and pain!
She shrunk and shuddered, and saw again—
(Ah, woe is me! Was it for thee,
Thou gentle maid! such sights to see?)

Again she saw that bosom old,
Again she felt that bosom cold,
And drew in her breath with a hissing sound:
Whereat the Knight turned wildly round,
And nothing saw, but his own sweet maid
With eyes upraised, as one that prayed.

The touch, the sight, had passed away,
And in its stead that vision blest,
Which comforted her after-rest,
While in the lady's arms she lay,
Had put a rapture in her breast,
And on her lips and o'er her eyes
Spread smiles like light!
With new surprise,
'What ails then my belovèd child?'
The Baron said — His daughter mild
Made answer, 'All will yet be well!'
I ween, she had no power to tell
Aught else: so mighty was the spell.

* * *

(1816)

KUBLA KHAN

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced;
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 't would win me
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

(1816)

FROST AT MIDNIGHT

The frost performs its secret ministry,
Unhelped by any wind. The owlet's cry
Came loud — and hark, again! loud as before.
The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,
Have left me to that solitude, which suits
Abstruser musings: save that at my side
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.
'T is calm indeed! so calm, that it disturbs
And vexes meditation with its strange
And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood,
This populous village! Sea, and hill, and wood,
With all the numberless goings on of life
Inaudible as dreams! the thin blue flame
Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not;

Only that film, which fluttered on the grate,
Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature
Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,
Making it a companionable form,
Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit
By its own moods interprets, every where
Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
And makes a toy of Thought.

But O! how oft,
How oft, at school, with most believing mind,
Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars,
To watch that fluttering stranger! and as oft
With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt
Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-tower,
Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang
From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day,
So sweetly, that they stirred and haunted me
With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear
Most like articulate sounds of things to come!
So gazed I, till the soothing things I dreamt
Lulled me to sleep, and sleep prolonged my dreams!
And so I brooded all the following morn,
Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye
Fixed with mock study on my swimming book:
Save if the door half opened, and I snatched
A hasty glance, and still my heart leaped up,
For still I hoped to see the stranger's face,
Townsman, or aunt, or sister more beloved,
My play-mate when we both were clothed alike!

Dear babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,
Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,
Fill up the interspersèd vacancies
And momentary pauses of the thought!
My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore
And in far other scenes! For I was reared
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
And saw naught lovely but the sky and stars
But thou, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear
The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in himself.
Great universal Teacher! he shall mold
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
Whether the summer clothe the general earth
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch
Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eave-drops fall
Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet Moon.

(1798)

HUMILITY THE MOTHER OF CHARITY

Frail creatures are we all! To be the best
Is but the fewest faults to have:—
Look thou then to thyself, and leave the rest
To God, thy conscience, and the grave.

(1830)

EPITAPH

Stop, Christian passer-by! — Stop, child of God,
And read with gentle breast. Beneath this sod
A poet lies, or that which once seemed he.—
O, lift one thought in prayer for S. T. C.;
That he who many a year with toil of breath
Found death in life, may here find life in death!
Mercy for praise — to be forgiven for fame
He asked, and hoped, through Christ.
Do thou the same!

(Nov. 9, 1833)

CHARLES LAMB (1775–1834)

There are few English authors with whose character and circumstances we may become so closely acquainted as with Charles Lamb's, on account of his habit of self-confession in his essays, his skill and charm as a letter-writer, and his many literary friendships. The first seven years of his life were spent at the Inner Temple, where his father had rooms as clerk and confidential servant to one of the barristers; for the next seven he was a 'blue coat boy' at Christ's Hospital, along with Coleridge. Lamb was passionately fond of London, where he passed nearly all his days, but in *Mackery End in Hertfordshire* and other essays he has given us delightful glimpses of holiday visits to the country home of his grandmother Field. It was on one of these visits that he fell in love with the 'fair Alice' of *Dream Children*, but this youthful romance was cruelly cut short. There was a strain of mental weakness in the family, and Lamb's mind gave way. Not long after his restoration, his sister Mary, the 'Bridget Elia' of the essays, in a sudden fit of insanity, was the cause of her mother's death; on her recovery it was necessary that some one should be responsible for her safe keeping, and to this task Charles devoted the rest of his life. At this time he was earning a small salary as a clerk in the office of the East India Company and his first efforts in literature, apart from a few sonnets and other short poems, were directed to eking out their scanty income. *A Tale of Rosamund Gray*, published in 1798, had no great success; he could not get his tragedy, *John Woodvil*, put on the stage; his comedy, *Mr. H.*, was acted at Drury Lane and failed. He contributed 'witty paragraphs' to the morning papers at the rate of 'sixpence a joke, and it was thought pretty high, too,' as he tells us in the essay on *Newspapers Thirty-five Years Ago*. Fortune first smiled upon them in the *Tales from Shakspere*, written for children by the brother and sister together, Charles taking the tragedies and Mary the comedies. His *Specimens of English Dramatists contemporary with Shakspere* was an important contribution to the criticism of the Elizabethan drama, and his position in the world of letters was now well established. Leigh Hunt, Wordsworth, Southey, Keats, Hazlitt, De Quincey, and many other famous men of the time were among his friends, and much of his leisure was spent in conversation and convivial meetings, from which he sometimes returned, as his sister says, 'very smoky and drinky.' His ready wit and unfailing kindliness of heart endeared him to his friends, as the charm of his personality and the delicacy of his humor have to an ever-increasing circle of readers. His most characteristic work is to be found in the *Essays of Elia*, which appeared in the *London Magazine* from 1820 to 1826.

THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES

I have had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful school-days;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,
Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom cronies;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I loved a love once, fairest among women;
Closed are her doors on me, I must not see her —
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man;
Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly;
Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces.

Ghost-like I paced round the haunts of my childhood,
Earth seemed a desert I was bound to traverse,
Seeking to find the old familiar faces.

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother,
Why wert not thou born in my father's dwelling?
So might we talk of the old familiar faces —

How some they have died, and some they have left me,
And some are taken from me; all are departed;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

(1798)

MACKERY END IN HERTFORDSHIRE

Bridget Elia has been my housekeeper for many a long year. I have obligations to Bridget, extending beyond the period of memory. We house together, old bachelor and maid, in a sort of double singleness; with such tolerable comfort, upon the whole, that I, for one, find in myself no sort of disposition to go out upon the mountains, with the rash king's offspring, to bewail my celibacy. We agree pretty well in our tastes and habits — yet so, as 'with a difference.' We are generally in harmony, with occasional bickerings — as it should be among near relations. Our sympathies are rather understood, than expressed; and once, upon my dissembling a tone in my voice more kind than ordinary, my cousin burst into tears, and complained that I was altered. We are both great readers in different directions. While I am hanging over (for the thousandth time) some passage in old Burton, or one of his strange contemporaries, she is abstracted in some modern tale, or adventure, whereof our common reading-table is daily fed with assiduously fresh supplies. Narrative teases me. I have little concern in the progress of events. She must have a story — well, ill, or indifferently told — so there be life stirring in it, and plenty of good or evil accidents. The fluctuations of fortune in fiction — and almost in real life — have ceased to interest, or operate but dully upon me. Out-of-the-way humors and opinions — heads with some diverting twist in them — the oddities of authorship please me most. My cousin has a native disrelish of anything that sounds odd or bizarre. Nothing goes down with her that is quaint, irregular, or out of the road of common sympathy. She 'holds Nature more clever.' I can pardon her blindness to the beautiful obliquities of the Religio Medici; but she must apologize to me for certain disrespectful insinuations, which she has been pleased to throw out latterly, touching the intellectuals of a dear favorite of mine, of the last century but one — the thrice noble, chaste, and virtuous,— but again somewhat fantastical, and original-brained, generous Margaret Newcastle.

It has been the lot of my cousin, oftener perhaps than I could have wished, to have had for her associates and mine, free-thinkers — leaders, and disciples, of novel philosophies and systems; but she neither wrangles with, nor accepts, their opinions. That which was good and venerable to her, when a child, retains its authority over her mind still. She never juggles or plays tricks with her understanding.

We are both of us inclined to be a little too positive; and I have observed the result of our disputes to be almost uniformly this — that in matters of fact, dates, and circumstances, it turns out, that I was in the right, and my cousin in the wrong. But where we have differed upon moral points; upon something proper to be done, or let alone; whatever heat of opposition, or steadiness of conviction, I set out with, I am sure always, in the long run, to be brought over to her way of thinking.

I must touch upon the foibles of my kinswoman with a gentle hand, for Bridget does not like to be told of her faults. She hath an awkward trick (to say no worse of it) of reading in company: at which times she will answer *yes* or *no* to a question, without fully understanding its purport — which is provoking, and derogatory in the highest degree to the dignity of the putter of the said question. Her presence of mind is equal to the most pressing trials of life, but will sometimes desert her upon trifling occasions. When the purpose requires it, and is a thing of moment, she can speak to it greatly; but in matters which are not stuff of the conscience, she hath been known sometimes to let slip a word less seasonably.

Her education in youth was not much attended to; and she happily missed all that train of female garniture, which passeth by the name of accomplishments. She was tumbled early, by accident or design, into a spacious closet of good old English reading, without much selection or prohibition, and browsed at will upon that fair and wholesome pasturage. Had I twenty girls, they should be brought up exactly in this fashion. I know not whether their chance in wedlock might

not be diminished by it; but I can answer for it, that it makes (if the worst come to the worst) most incomparable old maids.

In a season of distress, she is the truest comforter; but in the teasing accidents, and minor perplexities, which do not call out the *will* to meet them, she sometimes maketh matters worse by an excess of participation. If she does not always divide your trouble, upon the pleasanter occasions of life she is sure always to treble your satisfaction. She is excellent to be at play with, or upon a visit; but best, when she goes a journey with you.

We made an excursion together a few summers since, into Hertfordshire, to beat up the quarters of some of our less-known relations in that fine corn country.

The oldest thing I remember is Mackery End; or Mackarel End, as it is spelt, perhaps more properly, in some old maps of Hertfordshire: a farm-house,— delightfully situated within a gentle walk from Wheathampstead. I can just remember having been there, on a visit to a great-aunt, when I was a child, under the care of Bridget; who, as I have said, is older than myself by some ten years. I wish that I could throw into a heap the remainder of our joint existences, that we might share them in equal division. But that is impossible. The house was at that time in the occupation of a substantial yeoman, who had married my grandmother's sister. His name was Gladman. My grandmother was a Bruton, married to a Field. The Gladmans and the Brutons are still flourishing in that part of the county, but the Fields are almost extinct. More than forty years had elapsed since the visit I speak of; and, for the greater portion of that period, we had lost sight of the other two branches also. Who or what sort of persons inherited Mackery End — kindred or strange folk — we were afraid almost to conjecture, but determined some day to explore.

By somewhat a circuitous route, taking the noble park at Luton in our way from Saint Alban's, we arrived at the spot of our anxious curiosity about noon. The sight of the old farm-house, though every trace of it was effaced from my recollection, affected me with a pleasure which I had not experienced for many a year. For though *I* had forgotten it, *we* had never forgotten being there together, and we had been talking about Mackery End all our lives, till memory on my part became mocked with a phantom of itself, and I thought I knew the aspect of a place, which, when present, O how unlike it was to *that*, which I had conjured up so many times instead of it!

Still the air breathed balmily about it; the season was in the 'heart of June,' and I could say with the poet,

> But thou, that didst appear so fair
> To fond imagination,
> Dost rival in the light of day
> Her delicate creation!

Bridget's was more a waking bliss than mine, for she easily remembered her old acquaintance again — some altered features, of course, a little grudged at. At first, indeed, she was ready to disbelieve for joy; but the scene soon reconfirmed itself in her affections — and she traversed every outpost of the old mansion, to the wood-house, the orchard, the place where the pigeon-house had stood (house and birds were alike flown) — with a breathless impatience of recognition, which was more pardonable perhaps than decorous at the age of fifty odd. But Bridget in some things is behind her years.

The only thing left was to get into the house — and that was a difficulty which to me singly would have been insurmountable; for I am terribly shy in making myself known to strangers and out-of-date kinsfolk. Love, stronger than scruple, winged my cousin in without me; but she soon returned with a creature that might have sat to a sculptor for the image of Welcome. It was the youngest of the Gladmans; who, by marriage with a Bruton, had become mistress of the old mansion. A comely brood are the Brutons. Six of them, females, were noted as the handsomest young women in the county. But this adopted Bruton, in my mind, was better than they all — more comely. She was born too late to have remembered me. She just recollected in early life to have had her

cousin Bridget once pointed out to her, climbing a stile. But the name of kindred, and of cousinship, was enough. Those slender ties, that prove slight as gossamer in the rending atmosphere of a metropolis, bind faster, as we found it, in hearty, homely, loving Hertfordshire. In five minutes we were as thoroughly acquainted as if we had been born and bred up together; were familiar, even to the calling each other by our christian names. So christians should call one another. To have seen Bridget, and her — it was like the meeting of the two scriptural cousins! There was a grace and dignity, an amplitude of form and stature, answering to her mind, in this farmer's wife, which would have shined in a palace — or so we thought it. We were made welcome by husband and wife equally — we, and our friend that was with us.— I had almost forgotten him — but B. F. will not so soon forget that meeting, if peradventure he shall read this on the far-distant shores where the kangaroo haunts. The fatted calf was made ready, or rather was already so, as if in anticipation of our coming; and, after an appropriate glass of native wine, never let me forget with what honest pride this hospitable cousin made us proceed to Wheathampstead, to introduce us (as some new-found rarity) to her mother and sister Gladmans, who did indeed know something more of us, at a time when she almost knew nothing.— With what corresponding kindness we were received by them also — how Bridget's memory, exalted by the occasion, warmed into a thousand half-obliterated recollections of things and persons, to my utter astonishment, and her own — and to the astoundment of B. F. who sat by, almost the only thing that was not a cousin there,— old effaced images of more than half-forgotten names and circumstances still crowding back upon her, as words written in lemon come out upon exposure to a friendly warmth,— when I forget all this, then may my country cousins forget me; and Bridget no more remember, that in the days of weakling infancy I was her tender charge — as I have been her care in foolish manhood since — in those pretty pastoral walks, long ago, about Mackery End, in Hertfordshire. (1821)

DREAM-CHILDREN: A REVERIE

Children love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle, or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene — so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country — of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts, till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, 'that would be foolish, indeed.' And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighborhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her mem-

ory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psaltery by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer — here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till upon my looking grave, it desisted — the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said 'those innocents would do her no harm'; and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she — and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great house in the holidays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the twelve Cæsars, that had been emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out — sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me — and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then, — and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew-trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir apples, which were good for nothing but to look at — or in lying about upon the fresh grass, with all the fine garden smells around me — or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth — or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings,— I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavors of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L——, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out — and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries — and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy — for he was a good bit older than me — many a mile when I could not walk for pain; — and how in after-life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient, and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but after-

wards it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarreling with him (for we quarreled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he, their poor uncle, must have been when the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a-crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W——n; and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens — when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of representment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech: 'We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence and a name'—— and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor arm-chair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side — but John L. (or James Elia) was gone for ever. (1822)

A CHAPTER ON EARS

I have no ear.—

Mistake me not, reader,—nor imagine that I am by nature destitute of those exterior twin appendages, hanging ornaments, and (architectually speaking) handsome volutes to the human capital. Better my mother had never borne me. — I am, I think, rather delicately than copiously provided with those conduits; and I feel no disposition to envy the mule for his plenty, or the mole for her exactness, in those ingenious labyrinthine inlets — those indispensable side-intelligencers.

Neither have I incurred, or done anything to incur, with Defoe, that hideous disfigurement, which constrained him to draw upon assurance — to feel 'quite unabashed,' and at ease upon that article. I was never, I thank my stars, in the pillory; nor, if I read them aright, is it within the compass of my destiny, that I ever should be.

When therefore I say that I have no ear, you will understand me to mean — *for music.*— To say that this heart never melted at the concourse of sweet sounds, would be a foul self-libel.—'*Water parted from the sea*' never fails to move it strangely. So does '*In infancy.*' But they were used to be sung at her harpsichord (the old-fashioned instrument in vogue in those days) by a gentlewoman — the gentlest, sure, that ever merited the appellation — the sweetest — why should I hesitate to name Mrs. S——, once the blooming Fanny Weatheral of the Temple — who had power to thrill the soul of Elia, small imp as he was, even in his long coats; and to make him glow, tremble, and blush with a passion, that not faintly indicated the day-spring of that absorbing sentiment, which was afterwards destined to overwhelm and subdue his nature quite, for Alice W——n.

I even think that *sentimentally* I am disposed to harmony. But *organically* I am incapable of a tune. I have been practising '*God save the King*' all my life; whistling and humming of it over to myself in solitary corners; and am not yet arrived, they tell me, within many quavers of it. Yet hath the loyalty of Elia never been impeached.

I am not without suspicion that I have an undeveloped faculty of music within me. For, thrumming, in my wild way, on my friend A.'s piano, the other morning, while he was engaged in an adjoining

parlor,—on his return he was pleased to say, *'he thought it could not be the maid!'* On his first surprise at hearing the keys touched in somewhat an airy and masterful way, not dreaming of me, his suspicions had lighted on *Jenny*. But a grace snatched from a superior refinement, soon convinced him that some being,—technically perhaps deficient, but higher informed from a principle common to all the fine arts,—had swayed the keys to a mood which Jenny, with all her (less-cultivated) enthusiasm, could never have elicited from them. I mention this as a proof of my friend's penetration, and not with any view of disparaging Jenny.

Scientifically I could never be made to understand (yet have I taken some pains) what a note in music is; or how one note should differ from another. Much less in voices can I distinguish a soprano from a tenor. Only sometimes the thorough bass I contrive to guess at from its being supereminently harsh and disagreeable. I tremble, however, for my misapplication of the simplest terms of *that* which I disclaim. While I profess my ignorance, I scarce know what to *say* I am ignorant of. I hate, perhaps, by misnomers. *Sostenuto* and *adagio* stand in the like relation of obscurity to me; and *Sol, Fa, Mi, Re,* is as conjuring as *Baralipton.*

It is hard to stand alone — in an age like this,—(constituted to the quick and critical perception of all harmonious combinations, I verily believe, beyond all preceding ages, since Jubal stumbled upon the gamut)—to remain, as it were, singly unimpressible to the magic influences of an art which is said to have such an especial stroke at soothing, elevating, and refining the passions.—Yet, rather than break the candid current of my confessions, I must avow to you, that I have received a great deal more pain than pleasure from this so cried-up faculty.

I am constitutionally susceptible of noises. A carpenter's hammer in a warm summer noon, will fret me into more than midsummer madness. But those unconnected, unset sounds are nothing to the measured malice of music. The ear is passive to those single strokes; willingly enduring stripes, while it hath no task to con. To music it cannot be passive. It will strive — mine at least will — spite of its inaptitude, to thrid the maze; like an unskilled eye painfully poring upon hieroglyphics. I have sat through an Italian Opera, till, for sheer pain, and inexplicable anguish, I have rushed out into the noisiest places of the crowded streets, to solace myself with sounds, which I was not obliged to follow, and get rid of the distracting torment of endless, fruitless, barren attention! I take refuge in the unpretending assemblage of honest common-life sounds; — and the purgatory of the Enraged Musician becomes my paradise.

I have sat at an Oratorio (that profanation of the purposes of the cheerful playhouse) watching the faces of the auditory in the pit (what a contrast to Hogarth's Laughing Audience!) immovable, or affecting some faint emotion,—till (as some have said, that our occupations in the next world will be but a shadow of what delighted us in this) I have imagined myself in some cold theater in Hades, where some of the *forms* of the earthly one should be kept up, with none of the *enjoyment;* or like that —

> ——— Party in a parlor,
> All silent, and all DAMNED!

Above all, those insufferable concertos, and pieces of music, as they are called, do plague and embitter my apprehension. — Words are something; but to be exposed to an endless battery of mere sounds; to be long a dying, to lie stretched upon a rack of roses; to keep up languor by unintermitted effort; to pile honey upon sugar, and sugar upon honey, to an interminable tedious sweetness; to fill up sound with feeling, and strain ideas to keep pace with it; to gaze on empty frames, and be forced to make the pictures for yourself; to read a book *all stops,* and be obliged to supply the verbal matter; to invent extempore tragedies to answer to the vague gestures of an inexplicable rambling mime — these are faint shadows of what I have undergone from a series of the ablest-executed pieces of this empty *instrumental music.*

I deny not, that in the opening of a concert, I have experienced something vastly lulling and agreeable: — afterwards followeth the languor, and the op-

pression. Like that disappointing book in Patmos; or, like the comings on of melancholy, described by Burton, doth music make her first insinuating approaches: —'Most pleasant it is to such as are melancholy given, to walk alone in some solitary grove, betwixt wood and water, by some brook side, and to meditate upon some delightsome and pleasant subject, which shall effect him most, *amabilis insania,* and *mentis gratissimus error.* A most incomparable delight to build castles in the air, to go smiling to themselves, acting an infinite variety of parts, which they suppose, and strongly imagine, they act, or that they see done. — So delightsome these toys at first, they could spend whole days and nights without sleep, even whole years in such contemplations, and fantastical meditations, which are like so many dreams, and will hardly be drawn from them — winding and unwinding themselves as so many clocks, and still pleasing their humors, until at last the SCENE TURNS UPON A SUDDEN, and they being now habitated to such meditations and solitary places, can endure no company, can think of nothing but harsh and distasteful subjects. Fear, sorrow, suspicion, *subrusticus pudor,* discontent, cares, and weariness of life, surprise them on a sudden, and they can think of nothing else: continually suspecting, no sooner are their eyes open, but this infernal plague of melancholy seizeth on them, and terrifies their souls, representing some dismal object to their minds; which now, by no means, no labor, no persuasions, they can avoid, they cannot be rid of, they cannot resist.'

Something like this 'SCENE-TURNING' I have experienced at the evening parties, at the house of my good Catholic friend *Nov*——; who, by the aid of a capital organ, himself the most finished of players, converts his drawing-room into a chapel, his week days into Sundays, and these latter into minor heavens.[1]

When my friend commences upon one of those solemn anthems, which peradventure struck upon my heedless ear, rambling in the side aisles of the dim abbey, some five-and-thirty years since, waking a new sense, and putting a soul of old religion into my young apprehension — (whether it be *that,* in which the psalmist, weary of the persecutions of bad men, wisheth to himself dove's wings — or *that other* which, with a like measure of sobriety and pathos, inquireth by what means the young man shall best cleanse his mind) — a holy calm pervadeth me.— I am for the time

——— rapt above earth,
And possess joys not promised at my birth.

But when this master of the spell, not content to have laid a soul prostrate, goes on, in his power, to inflict more bliss than lies in her capacity to receive — impatient to overcome her 'earthly' with his 'heavenly,'— still pouring in, for protracted hours, fresh waves and fresh from the sea of sound, or from that inexhausted *German* ocean, above which, in triumphant progress, dolphin-seated, ride those Arions *Haydn* and *Mozart,* with their attendant Tritons *Bach, Beethoven,* and a countless tribe, whom to attempt to reckon up would but plunge me again in the deeps,— I stagger under the weight of harmony, reeling to and fro at my wit's end; — clouds, as of frankincense, oppress me — priests, altars, censers, dazzle before me — the genius of *his* religion hath me in her toils — a shadowy triple tiara invests the brow of my friend, late so naked, so ingenuous — he is Pope, — and by him sits, like as in the anomaly of dreams, a she-Pope too,—tri-coroneted like himself! — I am converted, and yet a Protestant; — at once *malleus hereticorum,* and myself grand heresiarch: or three heresies center in my person: I am Marcion, Ebion, and Cerinthus — Gog and Magog — what not? — till the coming in of the friendly supper-tray dissipates the figment, and a draught of true Lutheran beer (in which chiefly my friend shows himself no bigot) at once reconciles me to the rationalities of a purer faith; and restores to me the genuine unterrifying aspects of my pleasant-countenanced host and hostess.

(1821)

A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG

Mankind, says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend M. was obliging enough

[1] I have been there, and still would go;
'T is like a little heaven below.—*Dr. Watts.*

to read and explain to me, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw, clawing or biting it from the living animal, just as they do in Abyssinia to this day. This period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius in the second chapter of his Mundane Mutations, where he designates a kind of golden age by the term Cho-fang, literally the Cooks' holiday. The manuscript goes on to say, that the art of roasting, or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother) was accidentally discovered in the manner following. The swine-herd, Ho-ti, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his manner was, to collect mast for his hogs, left his cottage in the care of his eldest son Bo-bo, a great lubberly boy, who being fond of playing with fire, as younkers of his age commonly are, let some sparks escape into a bundle of straw, which kindling quickly, spread the conflagration over every part of their poor mansion, till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage (a sorry antediluvian makeshift of a building, you may think it), what was of much more importance, a fine litter of new-farrowed pigs, no less than nine in number, perished. China pigs have been esteemed a luxury all over the East from the remotest periods that we read of. Bo-bo was in the utmost consternation, as you may think, not so much for the sake of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labor of an hour or two, at any time, as for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odor assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which he had before experienced. What could it proceed from? — not from the burnt cottage — he had smelt that smell before — indeed this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young firebrand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed, or flower. A premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He burnt his fingers, and to cool them he applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crumbs of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life indeed, for before him no man had known it) he tasted — *crackling!* Again he felt and fumbled at the pig. It did not burn him so much now, still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit. The truth at length broke into his slow understanding, that it was the pig that smelt so, and the pig that tasted so delicious; and, surrendering himself up to the new-born pleasure, he fell to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion, when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders, as thick as hail-stones, which Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure, which he experienced in his lower regions, had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on, but he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialogue ensued.

'You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring? Is it not enough that you have burnt me down three houses with your dog's tricks, and be hanged to you, but you must be eating fire, and I know not what — what have you got there, I say?'

'O father, the pig, the pig, do come and taste how nice the burnt pig eats.'

The ears of Ho-ti tingled with horror. He cursed his son and he cursed himself that ever he should beget a son that should eat burnt pig.

Bo-bo, whose scent was wonderfully sharpened since morning, soon raked out another pig, and fairly rending it asunder, thrust the lesser half by main force into the fists of Ho-ti, still shouting out, 'Eat, eat, eat the burnt pig, father, only taste,— O Lord,'— with such-like barbarous ejaculations, cramming all the while as if he would choke.

Ho-ti trembled in every joint while he grasped the abominable thing, wavering

whether he should not put his son to death for an unnatural young monster, when the crackling scorching his fingers, as it had done his son's, and applying the same remedy to them, he in his turn tasted some of its flavor, which, make what sour mouths he would for a pretense, proved not altogether displeasing to him. In conclusion (for the manuscript here is a little tedious) both father and son fairly sat down to the mess, and never left off till they had despatched all that remained of the litter.

Bo-bo was strictly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbors would certainly have stoned them for a couple of abominable wretches, who could think of improving upon the good meat which God had sent them. Nevertheless, strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho-ti's cottage was burnt down now more frequently than ever. Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out in broad day, others in the night-time. As often as the sow farrowed, so sure was the house of Ho-ti to be in a blaze; and Ho-ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastising his son, seemed to grow more indulgent to him than ever. At length they were watched, the terrible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Pekin, then an inconsiderable assize town. Evidence was given, the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that some of the burnt pig, of which the culprits stood accused, might be handed into the box. He handled it, and they all handled it, and burning their fingers, as Bo-bo and his father had done before them, and nature prompting to each of them the same remedy, against the face of all the facts, and the clearest charge which judge had ever given, — to the surprise of the whole court, townsfolk, strangers, reporters, and all present — without leaving the box, or any manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of Not Guilty.

The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the manifest iniquity of the decision; and, when the court was dismissed, went privily, and bought up all the pigs that could be had for love or money. In a few days his lordship's town house was observed to be on fire. The thing took wing, and now there was nothing to be seen but fires in every direction. Fuel and pigs grew enormously dear all over the districts. The insurance offices one and all shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world. Thus this custom of firing houses continued, till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke, who made a discovery, that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (*burnt,* as they called it) without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of a gridiron. Roasting by the string, or spit, came in a century or two later, I forget in whose dynasty. By such slow degrees, concludes the manuscript, do the most useful, and seemingly the most obvious arts, make their way among mankind.

Without placing too implicit faith in the account above given, it must be agreed, that if a worthy pretext for so dangerous an experiment as setting houses on fire (especially in these days) could be assigned in favor of any culinary object, that pretext and excuse might be found in ROAST PIG.

Of all the delicacies in the whole *mundus edibilis,* I will maintain it to be the most delicate — *princeps obsoniorum.*

I speak not of your grown porkers — things between pig and pork — those hobbydehoys — but a young and tender suckling — under a moon old — guiltless as yet of the sty — with no original speck of the *amor immunditiae,* the hereditary failing of the first parent, yet manifest — his voice as yet not broken, but something between a childish treble, and a grumble — the mild forerunner, or *praeludium,* of a grunt.

He must be roasted. I am not ignorant that our ancestors ate them seethed, or boiled — but what a sacrifice of the exterior tegument!

There is no flavor comparable, I will contend, to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted, *crackling,* as it is well called — the very teeth are invited to their share of the pleasure at

this banquet in overcoming the coy, brittle resistance — with the adhesive oleaginous — O call it not fat — but an indefinable sweetness growing up to it — the tender blossoming of fat — fat cropped in the bud — taken in the shoot — in the first innocence — the cream and quintessence of the child-pig's yet pure food — the lean, no lean, but a kind of animal manna — or, rather, fat and lean (if it must be so) so blended and running into each other, that both together make but one ambrosian result, or common substance.

Behold him, while he is doing — it seemeth rather a refreshing warmth, than a scorching heat, that he is so passive to. How equably he twirleth round the string! Now he is just done. To see the extreme sensibility of that tender age, he hath wept out his pretty eyes — radiant jellies — shooting stars —

See him in the dish, his second cradle, how meek he lieth! — wouldst thou have had this innocent grow up to the grossness and indocility which too often accompany maturer swinehood? Ten to one he would have proved a glutton, a sloven, an obstinate, disagreeable animal — wallowing in all manner of filthy conversation — from these sins he is happily snatched away —

> Ere sin could blight, or sorrow fade,
> Death came with timely care —

his memory is odoriferous — no clown curseth, while his stomach half rejecteth, the rank bacon — no coalheaver bolteth him in reeking sausages — he hath a fair sepulcher in the grateful stomach of the judicious epicure — and for such a tomb might be content to die.

He is the best of sapors. Pineapple is great. She is indeed almost too transcendent — a delight, if not sinful, yet so like to sinning, that really a tender-conscienced person would do well to pause — too ravishing for mortal taste, she woundeth and excoriateth the lips that approach her — like lovers' kisses, she biteth — she is a pleasure bordering on pain from the fierceness and insanity of her relish — but she stoppeth at the palate — she meddleth not with the appetite — and the coarsest hunger might barter her consistently for a mutton chop.

Pig — let me speak his praise — is no less provocative of the appetite, than he is satisfactory to the criticalness of the censorious palate. The strong man may batten on him, and the weakling refuseth not his mild juices.

Unlike to mankind's mixed characters, a bundle of virtues and vices, inexplicably intertwisted, and not to be unraveled without hazard, he is — good throughout. No part of him is better or worse than another. He helpeth, as far as his little means extend, all around. He is the least envious of banquets. He is all neighbors' fare.

I am one of those who freely and ungrudgingly impart a share of the good things of this life which fall to their lot (few as mine are in this kind) to a friend. I protest I take as great an interest in my friend's pleasures, his relishes, and proper satisfactions, as in mine own. 'Presents,' I often say, 'endear Absents.' Hares, pheasants, partridges, snipes, barndoor chickens (those 'tame villatic fowl'), capons, plovers, brawn, barrels of oysters, I dispense as freely as I receive them. I love to taste them, as it were, upon the tongue of my friend. But a stop must be put somewhere. One would not, like Lear, 'give everything.' I make my stand upon pig. Methinks it is an ingratitude to the Giver of all good flavors, to extradomiciliate, or send out of the house, slightingly (under pretext of friendship, or I know not what), a blessing so particularly adapted, predestined, I may say, to my individual palate — It argues an insensibility.

I remember a touch of conscience in this kind at school. My good old aunt, who never parted from me at the end of a holiday without stuffing a sweetmeat, or some nice thing into my pocket, had dismissed me one evening with a smoking plum-cake, fresh from the oven. In my way to school (it was over London Bridge) a gray-headed old beggar saluted me (I have no doubt at this time of day that he was a counterfeit). I had no pence to console him with, and in the vanity of self-denial, and the very coxcombry of charity, school-boy-like, I made him a present of — the whole cake!

I walked on a little, buoyed up, as one is on such occasions, with a sweet soothing of self-satisfaction; but before I had got to the end of the bridge, my better feelings returned, and I burst into tears, thinking how ungrateful I had been to my good aunt, to go and give her good gift away to a stranger, that I had never seen before, and who might be a bad man for aught I knew; and then I thought of the pleasure my aunt would be taking in thinking that I — I myself, and not another — would eat her nice cake — and what should I say to her the next time I saw her — how naughty I was to part with her pretty present — and the odor of that spicy cake came back upon my recollection, and the pleasure and the curiosity I had taken in seeing her make it, and her joy when she sent it to the oven, and how disappointed she would feel that I had never had a bit of it in my mouth at last — and I blamed my impertinent spirit of alms-giving, and out-of-place hypocrisy of goodness, and above all I wished never to see the face again of that insidious, good-for-nothing, old gray impostor.

Our ancestors were nice in their method of sacrificing these tender victims. We read of pigs whipt to death with something of a shock, as we hear of any other obsolete custom. The age of discipline is gone by, or it would be curious to inquire (in a philosophical light merely) what effect this process might have towards intenerating and dulcifying a substance, naturally so mild and dulcet as the flesh of young pigs. It looks like refining a violet. Yet we should be cautious, while we condemn the inhumanity, how we censure the wisdom of the practice. It might impart a gusto —

I remember an hypothesis, argued upon by the young students, when I was at St. Omer's, and maintained with much learning and pleasantry on both sides, 'Whether, supposing that the flavor of a pig who obtained his death by whipping (*per flagellationem extremam*) superadded a pleasure upon the palate of a man more intense than any possible suffering we can conceive in the animal, is man justified in using that method of putting the animal to death?' I forget the decision.

His sauce should be considered. Decidedly, a few bread crumbs, done up with his liver and brains, and a dash of mild sage. But, banish, dear Mrs. Cook, I beseech you, the whole onion tribe. Barbecue your whole hogs to your palate, steep them in shalots, stuff them out with plantations of the rank and guilty garlic; you cannot poison them, or make them stronger than they are — but consider, he is a weakling — a flower.

(1822)

SIR WALTER SCOTT (1771–1832)

Scott's birthplace was Edinburgh. His father, a solicitor of creditable standing, had been the first of his family to adopt a town life, and Scott early evinced an innate attraction toward those ancestors who for centuries had linked their history with the stirring life of the Border. 'You will find me a rattle-skulled, half-lawyer, half-sportsman, through whose head a regiment of horse has been exercising since he was five years old,' he once wrote to a stranger. Lameness derived from a fever kept him inactive as a child and he was dreamy and fond of reading. As he grew up he entered robustly into outdoor sports; but his choicest pastime was cruising about the country-side after relics of folklore. Passing through the High-School and the College in Edinburgh, he studied law and, in 1792, became an advocate. His taste for country residence led him to settle on the Esk at Lasswade after his marriage in 1798, and from here as Sheriff of Selkirkshire, he removed to Ashestiel on the Tweed, in 1804. His *Border Minstrelsy* had appeared in 1802, and now his poems, *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805), *Marmion* (1808), *Lady of the Lake* (1810), and others in quick sequence began to supplement his profession as a means of livelihood. In 1812 he succeeded to a salary of £1300 as clerk of session, and he proceeded to materialize his dream of a feudal estate by purchasing, as nucleus, a hundred acres of rough land five miles down the Tweed at Abbotsford. Thither he removed with 'twenty-five cartloads of the veriest trash in nature, besides dogs, pigs, ponies, poultry, cows, calves'; he gives an amusing and significant account of 'the procession of my furniture, in which old swords, bows, targets, and lances, made a very conspicuous show. A family of turkeys was accommodated within the helmet of some *preux chevalier* of ancient border fame; and the very cows, for aught I know, were bearing banners and muskets.' From Abbotsford came the series of historical novels, beginning with *Waverly* (1814) and closing with *Castle Dangerous* (1831,— twenty-nine novels in half as many years. The quantity of energy which Scott poured into these works of fiction,— to say nothing of his Edition of Swift and *Life of Napoleon*,— while discharging his official duties and engaging in all the activities of a country-gentleman, is almost inconceivable. In addition, the work of his last years was done in sharp adversity. Soon after his marriage he had entered into a secret partnership with James and John Ballantyne, publishers of Edinburgh, and this business had been complicated with that of Constable and Co. His partners were feeble managers; only the extraordinary success of the novels had tided over a crisis for several years. It is estimated that Scott's writings earned him, during his lifetime, nearly a million dollars; but his outlay at Abbotsford and in other directions had been excessively lavish, and greatly increased after he was knighted in 1820. The crash came in 1825; Constable, the Ballantynes, and Scott went down together. From the age of fifty-five to sixty, in spite of breaking health and failing imagination, he wrought doggedly with his pen to pay off £117,000 of debt. When the end came nearly half the debt remained; but this was extinguished by his copyrights after his death. In any event, Scott's character would have lived as one signally illustrious and lovable; his last years conferred upon it the quality of heroism. The real sweep and variety of his genius is denoted in his novels. His poetry is, nevertheless, animated and stirring, and well exemplifies his power of delineating, with bold, free strokes, scenic background and enterprising action.

From MARMION, CANTO VI

Not far advanced was morning day
When Marmion did his troop array
To Surrey's camp to ride;
He had safe-conduct for his band
Beneath the royal seal and hand,
And Douglas gave a guide.
The ancient earl with stately grace
Would Clara on her palfrey place,
And whispered in an undertone,
'Let the hawk stoop, his prey is flown.'
The train from out the castle drew,
But Marmion stopped to bid adieu:
'Though something I might plain,' he said,
'Of cold respect to stranger guest,
Sent hither by your king's behest,

While in Tantallon's towers I stayed,
Part we in friendship from your land,
And, noble earl, receive my hand.'—
But Douglas round him drew his cloak,
Folded his arms, and thus he spoke: —
'My manors, halls, and bowers shall still
Be open at my sovereign's will
To each one whom he lists, howe'er
Unmeet to be the owner's peer.
My castles are my king's alone,
From turret to foundation-stone —
The hand of Douglas is his own,
And never shall in friendly grasp
The hand of such as Marmion clasp.'

Burned Marmion's swarthy cheek like fire
And shook his very frame for ire,
And —'This to me!' he said,
'An 't were not for thy hoary beard,
Such hand as Marmion's had not spared
To cleave the Douglas' head!
And first I tell thee, haughty peer,
He who does England's message here,
Although the meanest in her state,
May well, proud Angus, be thy mate;
And, Douglas, more I tell thee here,
Even in thy pitch of pride,
Here in thy hold, thy vassals near,—
Nay, never look upon your lord,
And lay your hands upon your sword,—
I tell thee, thou 'rt defied!
And if thou saidst I am not peer
To any lord in Scotland here,
Lowland or Highland, far or near,
Lord Angus, thou hast lied!'
On the earl's cheek the flush of rage
O'ercame the ashen hue of age:
Fierce he broke forth,—'And darest thou then
To beard the lion in his den,
The Douglas in his hall?
And hopest thou hence unscathed to go? —
No, by Saint Bride of Bothwell, no!
Up drawbridge, grooms — what, warder, ho!
Let the portcullis fall,—'
Lord Marmion turned,— well was his need,—
And dashed the rowels in his steed,
Like arrow through the archway sprung
The ponderous grate behind him rung;
To pass there was such scanty room,
The bars descending razed his plume.

The steed along the drawbridge flies
Just as it trembled on the rise;
Not lighter does the swallow skim
Along the smooth lake's level brim:
And when Lord Marmion reached his band,
He halts, and turns with clenchèd hand,
And shout of loud defiance pours,
And shook his gauntlet at the towers.
'Horse! horse!' the Douglas cried, 'and chase!'
But soon he reined his fury's pace:
'A royal messenger he came,
Though most unworthy of the name.—
A letter forged! Saint Jude to speed!
Did ever knight so foul a deed?[1]
At first in heart it liked me ill
When the king praised his clerkly skill.
Thanks to Saint Bothan, son of mine,
Save Gawain, ne'er could pen a line;
So swore I, and I swear it still,
Let my boy-bishop fret his fill.—
Saint Mary mend my fiery mood!
Old age ne'er cools the Douglas blood,
I thought to slay him where he stood.
'T is pity of him too,' he cried:
'Bold can he speak and fairly ride,
I warrant him a warrior tried.'
With this his mandate he recalls,
And slowly seeks his castle halls.

The day in Marmion's journey wore;
Yet, ere his passion's gust was o'er,
They crossed the heights of Stanrig-moor.
His troop more closely there he scanned,
And missed the Palmer from the band.
'Palmer or not,' young Blount did say,
'He parted at the peep of day;
Good sooth, it was in strange array.'
'In what array?' said Marmion quick.
'My lord, I ill can spell the trick;
But all night long with clink and bang
Close to my couch did hammers clang;
At dawn the falling drawbridge rang,
And from a loophole while I peep,
Old Bell-the-Cat came from the keep,
Wrapped in a gown of sables fair,
As fearful of the morning air;
Beneath, when that was blown aside,
A rusty shirt of mail I spied,

[1] Lest the reader should partake of the Earl's astonishment and consider the crime as inconsistent with the manners of the period, I have to remind him of the numerous forgeries (partly executed by a female assistant) devised by Robert of Artois, to forward his suit against the Countess Matilda; which, being detected, occasioned his flight into England, and proved the remote cause of Edward the Third's memorable wars in France. John Harding, also, was expressly hired by Edward IV to forge such documents as might appear to establish the claim of fealty asserted over Scotland by the English monarchs.

By Archibald won in bloody work
Against the Saracen and Turk;
Last night it hung not in the hall;
I thought some marvel would befall.
And next I saw them saddled lead
Old Cheviot forth, the earl's best steed,
A matchless horse, though something old,
Prompt in his paces, cool and bold.
I heard the Sheriff Sholto say
The earl did much the Master pray
To use him on the battle-day;
But he preferred '—'Nay, Henry, cease!
Thou sworn horse-courser, hold thy peace.—
Eustace, thou bear'st a brain — I pray,
What did Blount see at break of day?'

'In brief, my lord, we both descried —
For then I stood by Henry's side —
The Palmer mount and outwards ride
Upon the earl's own favorite steed.
All sheathed he was in armor bright,
And much resembled that same knight
Subdued by you in Cotswold fight;
Lord Angus wished him speed.'—
The instant that Fitz-Eustace spoke,
A sudden light on Marmion broke: —
'Ah! dastard fool, to reason lost!'
He muttered; ''T was nor fay nor ghost
I met upon the moonlight wold,
But living man of earthly mold.
O dotage blind and gross!
Had I but fought as wont, one thrust
Had laid De Wilton in the dust,
My path no more to cross.—
How stand we now? — he told his tale
To Douglas, and with some avail;
'T was therefore gloomed his rugged brow.—
Will Surrey dare to entertain
'Gainst Marmion charge disproved and vain?
Small risk of that, I trow.
Yet Clare's sharp questions must I shun,
Must separate Constance from the nun —
Oh! what a tangled web we weave
When first we practise to deceive!
A Palmer too! — no wonder why
I felt rebuked beneath his eye;
I might have known there was but one
Whose look could quell Lord Marmion.'

Stung with these thoughts, he urged to speed
His troop, and reached at eve the Tweed,
Where Lennel's convent closed their march.
There now is left but one frail arch,
Yet mourn thou not its cells:
Our time a fair exchange has made:
Hard by, in hospitable shade
A reverend pilgrim dwells,
Well worth the whole Bernardine brood
That e'er wore sandal, frock, or hood.
Yet did Saint Bernard's abbot there
Give Marmion entertainment fair,
And lodging for his train and Clare.
Next morn the baron climbed the tower,
To view afar the Scottish power,
Encamped on Flodden edge;
The white pavilions made a show
Like remnants of the winter snow
Along the dusky ridge.
Long Marmion looked: — at length his eye
Unusual movement might descry
Amid the shifting lines;
The Scottish host drawn out appears,
For, flashing on the hedge of spears,
The eastern sunbeam shines.
Their front now deepening, now extending,
Their flank inclining, wheeling, bending,
Now drawing back, and now descending,
The skilful Marmion well could know
They watched the motions of some foe
Who traversed on the plain below.

Even so it was. From Flodden ridge
The Scots beheld the English host
Leave Barmore-wood, their evening post,
And heedful watched them as they crossed
The Till by Twisel Bridge.
High sight it is and haughty, while
They dive into the deep defile;
Beneath the caverned cliff they fall,
Beneath the castle's airy wall.
By rock, by oak, by hawthorn-tree,
Troop after troop are disappearing;
Troop after troop their banners rearing
Upon the eastern bank you see;
Still pouring down the rocky den
Where flows the sullen Till,
And rising from the dim-wood glen,
Standards on standards, men on men,
In slow succession still,
And sweeping o'er the Gothic arch,
And pressing on, in ceaseless march,
To gain the opposing hill.
That morn, to many a trumpet clang,
Twisel! thy rock's deep echo rang,
And many a chief of birth and rank,
Saint Helen! at thy fountain drank.
Thy hawthorn glade, which now we see
In spring-tide bloom so lavishly,
Had then from many an axe its doom,

To give the marching columns room.
And why stands Scotland idly now,
Dark Flodden! on thy airy brow,
Since England gains the pass the while
And struggles through the deep defile?
What checks the fiery soul of James?
Why sits that champion of the dames
Inactive on his steed,
And sees, between him and his land,
Between him and Tweed's southern strand,
His host Lord Surrey lead?
What vails the vain knight-errant's brand? —
O Douglas, for thy leading wand!
Fierce Randolph, for thy speed!
Oh! for one hour of Wallace wight,
Or well-skilled Bruce, to rule the fight
And cry, 'Saint Andrew and our right!'
Another sight had seen that morn,
From Fate's dark book a leaf been torn,
And Flodden had been Bannockbourne! —
The precious hour has passed in vain,
And England's host has gained the plain,
Wheeling their march and circling still
Around the base of Flodden hill.

Ere yet the bands met Marmion's eye,
Fitz-Eustace shouted loud and high,
'Hark! hark! my lord, an English drum!
And see ascending squadrons come
Between Tweed's river and the hill,
Foot, horse, and cannon! Hap what hap,
My basnet to a prentice cap,
Lord Surrey's o'er the Till! —
Yet more! yet more! — how fair arrayed
They file from out the hawthorn shade,
And sweep so gallant by!
With all their banners bravely spread,
And all their armor flashing high,
Saint George might waken from the dead,
To see fair England's standards fly.'—
'Stint in thy prate,' quoth Blount, 'thou 'dst best,
And listen to our lord's behest.'—
With kindling brow Lord Marmion said,
'This instant be our band arrayed;
The river must be quickly crossed,
That we may join Lord Surrey's host.
If fight King James,— as well I trust
That fight he will, and fight he must,—
The Lady Clare behind our lines
Shall tarry while the battle joins.'

Himself he swift on horseback threw,
Scarce to the abbot bade adieu,
Far less would listen to his prayer
To leave behind the helpless Clare.
Down to the Tweed his band he drew,
And muttered as the flood they view,
'The pheasant in the falcon's claw,
He scarce will yield to please a daw;
Lord Angus may the abbot awe,
So Clare shall bide with me.'
Then on that dangerous ford and deep
Where to the Tweed Leat's eddies creep,
He ventured desperately:
And not a moment will he bide
Till squire or groom before him ride;
Headmost of all he stems the tide,
And stems it gallantly.
Eustace held Clare upon her horse,
Old Hubert led her rein,
Stoutly they braved the current's course,
And, though far downward driven perforce,
The southern bank they gain.
Behind them straggling came to shore,
As best they might, the train:
Each o'er his head his yew-bow bore,
A caution not in vain;
Deep need that day that every string,
By wet unharmed, should sharply ring.
A moment then Lord Marmion stayed,
And breathed his steed, his men arrayed,
Then forward moved his band,
Until, Lord Surrey's rear-guard won,
He halted by a cross of stone,
That on a hillock standing lone
Did all the field command.

Hence might they see the full array
Of either host for deadly fray;
Their marshaled lines stretched east and west,
And fronted north and south,
And distant salutation passed
From the loud cannon mouth;
Not in the close successive rattle
That breathes the voice of modern battle,
But slow and far between.
The hillock gained, Lord Marmion stayed:
'Here, by this cross,' he gently said,
'You well may view the scene.
Here shalt thou tarry, lovely Clare:
Oh! think of Marmion in thy prayer! —
Thou wilt not? — well, no less my care
Shall, watchful, for thy weal prepare.—
You, Blount and Eustace, are her guard,
With ten picked archers of my train;
With England if the day go hard,
To Berwick speed amain.—
But if we conquer, cruel maid,
My spoils shall at your feet be laid,
When here we meet again.'

He waited not for answer there,
And would not mark the maid's despair,
Nor heed the discontented look
From either squire, but spurred amain,
And dashing through the battle-plain,
His way to Surrey took.

'The good Lord Marmion, by my life!
Welcome to danger's hour! —
Short greeting serves in time of strife.—
Thus have I ranged my power:
Myself will rule this central host,
Stout Stanley fronts their right,
My sons command the vaward post,
With Brian Tunstall, stainless knight;
Lord Dacre, with his horsemen light,
Shall be in rearward of the fight,
And succor those that need it most.
Now gallant Marmion, well I know,
Would gladly to the vanguard go;
Edmund, the Admiral, Tunstall there,
With thee their charge will blithely share;
The fight thine own retainers too
Beneath De Burg, thy steward true.'
'Thanks, noble Surrey!' Marmion said,
Nor further greeting there he paid,
But, parting like a thunderbolt,
First in the vanguard made a halt,
Where such a shout there rose
Of 'Marmion! Marmion!' that the cry,
Up Flodden mountain shrilling high,
Startled the Scottish foes.

Blount and Fitz-Eustace rested still
With Lady Clare upon the hill,
On which — for far the day was spent —
The western sunbeams now were bent;
The cry they heard, its meaning knew,
Could plain their distant comrades view:
Sadly to Blount did Eustace say,
'Unworthy office here to stay!
No hope of gilded spurs to-day.—
But see! look up — on Flodden bent
The Scottish foe has fired his tent.'
And sudden, as he spoke,
From the sharp ridges of the hill,
All downward to the banks of Till,
Was wreathed in sable smoke.
Volumed and vast, and rolling far,
The cloud enveloped Scotland's war
As down the hill they broke;
Nor martial shout, nor minstrel tone,
Announced their march; their tread alone,
At times one warning trumpet blown,
At times a stifled hum,
Told England, from his mountain-throne
King James did rushing come.
Scarce could they hear or see their foes
Until at weapon-point they close.—
They close in clouds of smoke and dust,
With sword-sway and with lance's thrust;
And such a yell was there,
Of sudden and portentous birth,
As if men fought upon the earth,
And fiends in upper air:
Oh! life and death were in the shout,
Recoil and rally, charge and rout,
And triumph and despair.
Long looked the anxious squires; their eye
Could in the darkness nought descry.

At length the freshening western blast
Aside the shroud of battle cast;
And first the ridge of mingled spears
Above the brightening cloud appears,
And in the smoke the pennons flew,
As in the storm the white seamew.
Then marked they, dashing broad and far,
The broken billows of the war,
And plumed crests of chieftains brave
Floating like foam upon the wave;
But nought distinct they see:
Wide raged the battle on the plain;
Spears shook and falchions flashed amain;
Fell England's arrow-flight like rain;
Crests rose, and stooped, and rose again
Wild and disorderly.
Amid the scene of tumult, high
They saw Lord Marmion's falcon fly;
And stainless Tunstall's banner white,
And Edmund Howard's lion bright,
Still bear them bravely in the fight,
Although against them come
Of gallant Gordons many a one,
And many a stubborn Badenoch-man,
And many a rugged Border clan,
With Huntly and with Home.—

Far on the left, unseen the while,
Stanley broke Lennox and Argyle,
Though there the western mountaineer
Rushed with bare bosom on the spear,
And flung the feeble targe aside,
And with both hands the broadsword plied.
'T was vain.— But Fortune, on the right,
With fickle smile cheered Scotland's fight.
Then fell that spotless banner white,
The Howard's lion fell;
Yet still Lord Marmion's falcon flew
With wavering flight, while fiercer grew
Around the battle-yell.
The Border slogan rent the sky!
A Home! a Gordon! was the cry:
Loud were the clanging blows;

Advanced,— forced back,— now low, now high,
The pennon sunk and rose;
As bends the bark's mast in the gale,
When rent are rigging, shrouds, and sail,
It wavered mid the foes.
No longer Blount the view could bear:
'By heaven and all its saints! I swear
I will not see it lost!
Fitz-Eustace, you with Lady Clare
May bid your beads and patter prayer,—
I gallop to the host.'
And to the fray he rode amain,
Followed by all the archer train.
The fiery youth, with desperate charge,
Made for a space an opening large,—
The rescued banner rose,—
But darkly closed the war around,
Like pine-tree rooted from the ground
It sank among the foes.
Then Eustace mounted too,— yet stayed,
As loath to leave the helpless maid,
When, fast as shaft can fly,
Bloodshot his eyes, his nostrils spread,
The loose rein dangling from his head,
Housing and saddle bloody red,
Lord Marmion's steed rushed by:
And Eustace, maddening at the sight,
A look and sign to Clara cast
To mark he would return in haste,
Then plunged into the fight.

Ask me not what the maiden feels,
Left in that dreadful hour alone:
Perchance her reason stoops or reels;
Perchance a courage, not her own,
Braces her mind to desperate tone.—
The scattered van of England wheels;—
She only said, as loud in air
The tumult roared. 'Is Wilton there?'—
They fly, or, maddened by despair,
Fight but to die,—'Is Wilton there?'
With that, straight up the hill there rode
Two horsemen drenched with gore,
And in their arms, a helpless load,
A wounded knight they bore.
His hand still strained the broken brand;
His arms were smeared with blood and sand.
Dragged from among the horses' feet,
With dinted shield and helmet beat,
The falcon-crest and plumage gone,
Can that be haughty Marmion! . . .
Young Blount his armor did unlace,
And, gazing on his ghastly face,
Said, 'By Saint George, he 's gone!
That spear-wound has our master sped,
And see the deep cut on his head!
Good-night to Marmion.'—
'Unnurtured Blount! thy brawling cease:
He opes his eyes,' said Eustace; 'peace!'

When, doffed his casque, he felt free air,
Around gan Marmion wildly stare:
'Where 's Harry Blount? Fitz-Eustace where?
Linger ye here, ye hearts of hare!
Redeem my pennon,— charge again!
Cry, 'Marmion to the rescue!'— Vain!
Last of my race, on battle-plain
That shout shall ne'er be heard again!—
Yet my last thought is England's — fly,
To Dacre bear my signet-ring:
Tell him his squadrons up to bring.—
Fitz-Eustace, to Lord Surrey hie:
Tunstall lies dead upon the field,
His lifeblood stains the spotless shield;
Edmund is down; my life is reft;
The Admiral alone is left.
Let Stanley charge with spur of fire,—
With Chester charge, and Lancashire,
Full upon Scotland's central host,
Or victory and England's lost.—
Must I bid twice? — hence, varlets fly! —
Leave Marmion here alone — to die.'
They parted, and alone he lay;
Clare drew her from the sight away,
Till pain wrung forth a lowly moan,
And half he murmured, 'Is there none
Of all my halls have nurst,
Page, squire, or groom, one cup to bring
Of blessed water from the spring,
To slake my dying thirst!'

O Woman! in our hours of ease
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made;
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou! —
Scarce were the piteous accents said,
When with the baron's casque the maid
To the nigh streamlet ran:
Forgot were hatred, wrongs, and fears;
The plaintive voice alone she hears,
Sees but the dying man.
She stooped her by the runnel's side,
But in abhorrence backward drew;
For, oozing from the mountain's side
Where raged the war, a dark-red tide
Was curdling in the streamlet blue.
Where shall she turn? — behold her mark
A little fountain cell,
Where water, clear as diamond spark,
In a stone basin fell.
Above, some half-worn letters say,

**Drink, weary pilgrim, drink, and pray
For the kind soul of Sibyl Grey
Who built this cross and well.**

She filled the helm and back she hied,
And with surprise and joy espied
A monk supporting Marmion's head;
A pious man, whom duty brought
To dubious verge of battle fought,
To shrive the dying, bless the dead.

Deep drank Lord Marmion of the wave,
And, as she stooped his brow to lave—
'Is it the hand of Clare,' he said,
'Or injured Constance, bathes my head?'
Then, as remembrance rose,—
'Speak not to me of shrift or prayer!
I must redress her woes.
Short space, few words, are mine to spare;
Forgive and listen, gentle Clare!'
'Alas!' she said, 'the while,—
Oh! think of your immortal weal!
In vain for Constance is your zeal!
She—died at Holy Isle.'—
Lord Marmion started from the ground
As light as if he felt no wound,
Though in the action burst the tide
In torrents from his wounded side.
'Then it was truth,' he said—'I knew
That the dark presage must be true.—
I would the Fiend, to whom belongs
The vengeance due to all her wrongs,
Would spare me but a day!
For wasting fire, and dying groan,
And priests slain on the altar stone,
Might bribe him for delay.
It may not be!—this dizzy trance—
Curse on yon base marauder's lance,
And doubly cursed my failing brand!
A sinful heart makes feeble hand.'
Then fainting down on earth he sunk,
Supported by the trembling monk.

With fruitless labor Clara bound
And strove to stanch the gushing wound:
The monk with unavailing cares
Exhausted all the Church's prayers.
Ever, he said, that close and near,
A lady's voice was in his ear,
And that the priest he could not hear;
For that she ever sung,
'In the lost battle borne down by the flying,
Where mingles war's rattle with groans of the dying!'
So the notes rung.—
'Avoid thee, Fiend!—with cruel hand
Shake not the dying sinner's sand!—
Oh! look, my son, upon yon sign
Of the Redeemer's grace divine;
Oh! think on faith and bliss!—
By many a death-bed I have been,
And many a sinner's parting seen,
But never aught like this.'
The war, that for a space did fail,
Now trebly thundering swelled the gale,
And 'Stanley!' was the cry;—
A light on Marmion's visage spread,
And fired his glazing eye;
With dying hand above his head
He shook the fragment of his blade,
And shouted 'Victory!—
Charge, Chester, charge! On, Stanley, on!'
Were the last words of Marmion.

* * *

(1808)

SOLDIER, REST!

Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
Fairy strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting fields no more;
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
Armor's clang, or war-steed champing,
Trump nor pibroch summon here
Mustering clan or squadron tramping.
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
At the daybreak from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow.
Ruder sounds shall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here,
Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
Shouting clans or squadrons stamping.

Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveillé.
Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying:
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen
How thy gallant steed lay dying.
Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye
Here no bugles sound reveillé.

(1810)

GEORGE NOEL GORDON, LORD BYRON (1788–1824)

Byron's father, a military rake known as 'mad Jack Byron,' had squandered his wife's estate and terminated an ill-spent life within three years after the poet's birth in a London lodging house. His mother was a 'mad Gordon.' Byron therefore was half Scotch, and part of his childhood was spent in Scotland. His early training, chiefly at the hands of nurses and tutors, was incoherent and 'shabby-genteel.' When ten years of age he succeeded to the titles and estates of his uncle, 'the wicked Lord Byron' of Newstead. At Harrow (1801–5), in spite of a deformed ankle which the torture of surgeons had failed to correct and which his pride and sensitiveness converted into a curse, he was energetic in sports and laid the basis of those athletic habits which remained with him through life. While at Trinity College, Cambridge, he brought out his first volume of poems, *Hours of Idleness* (1807). To the ridicule of the *Edinburgh Review* he retorted angrily and with some vigor in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809), then left England for two years of travel in Spain, Greece and the Levant, and, on his return, published the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1812). The effect was electrical. Young, proud, traveled, mysteriously unhappy, romantically wicked, with a countenance of wild insolent beauty, a poet and a peer, Byron became the rage. Under such circumstances poetry is not critically scanned for its deeper elements. Byron's powers were sufficient for the occasion. From the midst of the social whirl into which he was caught up he extemporized tale after tale. *The Giaour*, *The Bride of Abydos*, *The Corsair*, *Lara*, followed each other in swift succession. Scott seemed local and tame, Marmion a schoolboy. Fashion followed and the critics fawned. Then came Byron's marriage, and a year later, his separation, and in 'one of those periodical spasms of British morality' his worshippers suddenly discovered that their idol had been a monster. Byron left England never to return alive. In Switzerland he met Shelley and the two poets spent some months together among the Alps, an intimacy of great value to both, which they afterward renewed in Italy. From this time Byron's poetry, though still unequal, showed a deeper quality and his activity increased. The third canto of *Childe Harold*, *The Prisoner of Chillon*, and many short pieces of new sincerity and strength were finished, and *Manfred* begun, in Switzerland. In the autumn of 1816 he settled at Venice, and, except for short tours, remained there until in 1819 he removed to Ravenna in order to be near the Countess Guiccioli. He became domiciled with that lady in 1819, and in 1821 they moved to Pisa. Throughout his Italian residence Byron had been greatly interested in the plans for Italian independence, and had constantly given aid and comfort to the Carbonari. In 1823 he resolved to devote his fortune and services to the cause of Greek freedom, and it was while assisting in the organization of the patriot forces in Greece, that he succumbed to a fever at Missolonghi when only thirty-six years of age. During his seven years in Italy Byron had completed *Manfred* (1817) and written seven other dramas, and had added a fourth canto to *Childe Harold*. What was more important he had discovered in *Beppo* (1818) the serio-comic vein in which his real strength lay, had produced in *The Vision of Judgment* (1821) the sublimest of parodies, and in *Don Juan* (1819–23) his masterpiece. Few poets are so difficult to represent by selections as Byron. His lyrics do not exhibit him to advantage, and extracts give but a poor idea of his variety, sweep, and vitality. Great faults and great virtues 'antithetically mixed'; a spirit hampered by mal-direction, affectation, and self-sophistication, but when it gets free, giant and fine; an imagination full of clay and crudities, but volleying at times into prodigious passion, reality, and compass; this is Byron.

SONNET ON CHILLON

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart —
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consigned —
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,

And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar — for 't was trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard! May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

December 5, 1816

From CHILDE HAROLD, CANTO III

Adieu to thee, fair Rhine! How long delighted
The stranger fain would linger on his way!
Thine is a scene alike where souls united
Or lonely Contemplation thus might stray;
And could the ceaseless vultures cease to prey
On self-condemning bosoms, it were here,
Where Nature, nor too somber nor too gay,
Wild but not rude, awful yet not austere,
Is to the mellow Earth as Autumn to the year.

Adieu to thee again! a vain adieu!
There can be no farewell to scene like thine;
The mind is colored by thy every hue;
And if reluctantly the eyes resign
Their cherished gaze upon thee, lovely Rhine!
'T is with the thankful heart of parting praise;
More mighty spots may rise, more glaring shine,
But none unite in one attaching maze
The brilliant, fair, and soft,— the glories of old days,

The negligently grand, the fruitful bloom
Of coming ripeness, the white city's sheen,
The rolling stream, the precipice's gloom,
The forest's growth and Gothic walls between,
The wild rocks shaped as they had turrets been,
In mockery of man's art; and these withal
A race of faces happy as the scene,
Whose fertile bounties here extend to all,
Still springing o'er thy banks, though Empires near them fall.

But these recede. Above me are the Alps,
The palaces of Nature, whose vast walls
Have pinnacled in clouds their snowy scalps,
And throned Eternity in icy halls
Of cold sublimity, where forms and falls
The avalanche — the thunderbolt of snow!
All that expands the spirit, yet appalls,
Gather around these summits, as to show
How earth may pierce to Heaven, yet leave vain man below.

But ere these matchless heights I dare to scan,
There is a spot should not be passed in vain,—
Morat! the proud, the patriot field! where man
May gaze on ghastly trophies of the slain,
Nor blush for those who conquered on that plain;
Here Burgundy bequeathed his tombless host,
A bony heap, through ages to remain,
Themselves their monument; the Stygian coast
Unsepulchered they roamed, and shrieked each wandering ghost.

While Waterloo with Cannæ's carnage vies,
Morat and Marathon twin names shall stand;
They were true Glory's stainless victories,
Won by the unambitious heart and hand
Of a proud, brotherly, and civic band,
All unbought champions in no princely cause
Of vice-entailed Corruption; they no land
Doomed to bewail the blasphemy of laws
Making kings' rights divine, by some Draconic clause.

By a lone wall a lonelier column rears
A gray and grief-worn aspect of old days:
'T is the last remnant of the wreck of years,
And looks as with the wild-bewildered gaze
Of one to stone converted by amaze,
Yet still with consciousness; and there it stands
Making a marvel that it not decays,
When the coeval pride of human hands,
Leveled Adventicum hath strewed her subject lands.

And there — oh! sweet and sacred be the name! —
Julia — the daughter, the devoted — gave
Her youth to Heaven; her heart, beneath a claim

Nearest to Heaven's, broke o'er a father's grave.
Justice is sworn 'gainst tears, and hers would crave
The life she lived in; but the judge was just,
And then she died on him she could not save.
Their tomb was simple, and without a bust,
And held within their urn one mind, one heart, one dust.

But these are deeds which should not pass away,
And names that must not wither though the earth
Forgets her empires with a just decay,
The enslavers and the enslaved, their death and birth;
The high, the mountain-majesty of worth
Should be, and shall, survivor of its woe,
And from its immortality look forth
In the sun's face, like yonder Alpine snow,
Imperishably pure beyond all things below.

Lake Leman woos me with its crystal face,
The mirror where the stars and mountains view
The stillness of their aspect in each trace
Its clear depth yields of their far height and hue;
There is too much of man here, to look through
With a fit mind the might which I behold;
But soon in me shall Loneliness renew
Thoughts hid, but not less cherished than of old,
Ere mingling with the herd had penned me in their fold.

To fly from, need not be to hate, mankind:
All are not fit with them to stir and toil,
Nor is it discontent to keep the mind
Deep in its fountain, lest it overboil
In the hot throng, where we become the spoil
Of our infection, till too late and long
We may deplore and struggle with the coil,
In wretched interchange of wrong for wrong
Midst a contentious world, striving where none are strong.

There, in a moment we may plunge our years
In fatal penitence, and in the blight
Of our own soul turn all our blood to tears,
And color things to come with hues of Night;
The race of life becomes a hopeless flight
To those who walk in darkness: on the sea
The boldest steer but where their ports invite;
But there are wanderers o'er Eternity
Whose bark drives on and on, and anchored ne'er shall be.

Is it not better, then, to be alone,
And love Earth only for its earthly sake?
By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone,
Or the pure bosom of its nursing lake,
Which feeds it as a mother who doth make
A fair but froward infant her own care,
Kissing its cries away as these awake; —
Is it not better thus our lives to wear,
Than join the crushing crowd, doomed to inflict or bear?

I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me; and to me
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of human cities torture: I can see
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a fleshly chain.
Classed among creatures, when the soul can flee,
And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain.

And thus I am absorbed, and this is life:
I look upon the peopled desert past,
As on a place of agony and strife,
Where, for some sin, to sorrow I was cast,
To act and suffer, but remount at last
With a fresh pinion; which I feel to spring,
Though young, yet waxing vigorous as the blast
Which it would cope with, on delighted wing,
Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round our being cling.

And when, at length, the mind shall be all free
From what it hates in this degraded form,
Reft of its carnal life, save what shall be
Existent happier in the fly and worm —
When elements to elements conform,
And dust is as it should be, shall I not
Feel all I see, less dazzling, but more warm?
The bodiless thought? the Spirit of each spot?

Of which, even now, I share at times the
immortal lot?

Are not the mountains, waves, and skies, a
part
Of me and of my soul, as I of them?
Is not the love of these deep in my heart
With a pure passion? should I not contemn
All objects, if compared with these? and
stem
A tide of suffering, rather than forego
Such feelings for the hard and worldly
phlegm
Of those whose eyes are only turned below,
Gazing upon the ground, with thoughts
which dare not glow?

But this is not my theme; and I return
To that which is immediate, and require
Those who find contemplation in the urn,
To look on One, whose dust was once all
fire,
A native of the land where I respire
The clear air for a while — a passing guest
Where he became a being,— whose desire
Was to be glorious; 't was a foolish quest,
The which to gain and keep, he sacrificed
all rest.

Here the self-torturing sophist, wild Rous-
seau,
The apostle of affliction, he who threw
Enchantment over passion, and from woe
Wrung overwhelming eloquence, first drew
The breath which made him wretched; yet
he knew
How to make madness beautiful and cast
O'er erring deeds and thoughts a heavenly
hue
Of words, like sunbeams, dazzling as they
past
The eyes, which o'er them shed tears feel-
ingly and fast.

His love was passion's essence: — as a tree
On fire by lightning, with ethereal flame
Kindled he was, and blasted; for to be
Thus, and enamored, were in him the same.
But his was not the love of living dame,
Nor of the dead who rise upon our dreams,
But of ideal beauty, which became
In him existence, and o'erflowing teems
Along his burning page, distempered though
it seems.

This breathed itself to life in Julie, *this*
Invested her with all that 's wild and sweet;
This hallowed, too, the memorable kiss
Which every morn his fevered lip would
greet,
From hers, who but with friendship his
would meet;
But to that gentle touch through brain and
breast
Flashed the thrilled spirit's love-devouring
heat;
In that absorbing sigh perchance more
blest
Than vulgar minds may be with all they
seek possest.

His life was one long war with self-sought
foes,
Or friends by him self-banished; for his
mind
Had grown Suspicion's sanctuary, and chose,
For its own cruel sacrifice, the kind,
'Gainst whom he raged with fury strange
and blind.
But he was phrensied,— wherefore, who may
know?
Since cause might be which skill could never
find;
But he was phrensied by disease or woe,
To that worst pitch of all, which wears
a reasoning show.

For then he was inspired, and from him
came,
As from the Pythian's mystic cave of yore,
Those oracles which set the world in flame,
Nor ceased to burn till kingdoms were no
more:
Did he not this for France? which lay be-
fore
Bowed to the inborn tyranny of years?
Broken and trembling to the yoke she bore,
Till by the voice of him and his compeers
Roused up to too much wrath, which fol
lows o'ergrown fears?

They made themselves a fearful monument!
The wreck of old opinions — things which
grew,
Breathed from the birth of time: the veil
they rent,
And what behind it lay, all earth shall
view.
But good with ill they also overthrew,
Leaving but ruins, wherewith to rebuild
Upon the same foundation, and renew
Dungeons and thrones, which the same hour
refilled,
As heretofore, because ambition was self-
willed.

But this will not endure, nor be endured!
Mankind have felt their strength, and made it felt.
They might have used it better, but, allured
By their new vigor, sternly have they dealt
On one another; pity ceased to melt
With her once natural charities. But they
Who in oppression's darkness caved had dwelt,
They were not eagles, nourished with the day;
What marvel then, at times, if they mistook their prey?

What deep wounds ever closed without a scar?
The heart's bleed longest, and but heal to wear
That which disfigures it; and they who war
With their own hopes, and have been vanquished, bear
Silence, but not submission: in his lair
Fixed Passion holds his breath, until the hour
Which shall atone for years; none need despair:
It came, it cometh, and will come,—the power
To punish or forgive—in *one* we shall be slower.

Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake,
With the wild world I dwelt in, is a thing
Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake
Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.
This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing
To waft me from distraction; once I loved
Torn ocean's roar, but thy soft murmuring
Sounds sweet as if a Sister's voice reproved,
That I with stern delights should e'er have been so moved.

It is the hush of night, and all between
Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,
Mellowed and mingling, yet distinctly seen,
Save darkened Jura, whose capt heights appear
Precipitously steep; and drawing near,
There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,
Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the ear
Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more;

He is an evening reveler, who makes
His life an infancy, and sings his fill;
At intervals, some bird from out the brakes
Starts into voice a moment, then is still.
There seems a floating whisper on the hill,
But that is fancy, for the starlight dews
All silently their tears of love instil,
Weeping themselves away, till they infuse
Deep into nature's breast the spirit of her hues.

Ye stars! which are the poetry of heaven!
If in your bright leaves we would read the fate
Of men and empires,—'t is to be forgiven,
That in our aspirations to be great,
Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
And claim a kindred with you; for ye are
A beauty and a mystery, and create
In us such love and reverence from afar,
That fortune, fame, power, life, have named themselves a star.

All heaven and earth are still—though not in sleep,
But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;
And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep:—
All heaven and earth are still: From the high host
Of stars, to the lulled lake and mountain coast,
All is concentered in a life intense,
Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf is lost,
But hath a part of being, and a sense
Of that which is of all Creator and defence.

Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
In solitude, where we are *least* alone;
A truth, which through our being then doth melt,
And purifies from self: it is a tone,
The soul and source of music, which makes known
Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm
Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,
Binding all things with beauty:— 't would disarm
The specter Death, had he substantial power to harm.

Not vainly did the early Persian make
His altar the high places, and the peak
Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus take
A fit and unwalled temple, there to seek
The Spirit, in whose honor shrines are weak,

Upreared of human hands. Come, and compare
Columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or Greek,
With Nature's realms of worship, earth and air,
Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy prayer!

The sky is changed! — and such a change! Oh, night,
And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet, lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!

And this is in the night: — Most glorious night!
Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me be
A sharer in thy fierce and far delight, —
A portion of the tempest and of thee!
How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!
And now again 't is black — and now, the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth.

Now, where the swift Rhone cleaves his way between
Heights which appear as lovers who have parted
In hate, whose mining depths so intervene,
That they can meet no more, though broken-hearted;
Though in their souls, which thus each other thwarted,
Love was the very root of the fond rage
Which blighted their life's bloom, and then departed:
Itself expired, but leaving them an age
Of years all winters, — war within themselves to wage:

Now, where the quick Rhone thus hath cleft his way,
The mightiest of the storms hath ta'en his stand:
For here, not one, but many, make their play,
And fling their thunder-bolts from hand to hand,
Flashing and cast around; of all the band,
The brightest through these parted hills hath forked
His lightnings, — as if he did understand,
That in such gaps as desolation worked,
There the hot shaft should blast whatever therein lurked.

Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake, lightnings! ye!
With night, and clouds, and thunder, and a soul
To make these felt and feeling, well may be
Things that have made me watchful; the far roll
Of your departing voices, is the knoll
Of what in me is sleepless, — if I rest.
But where of ye, O tempests! is the goal?
Are ye like those within the human breast?
Or do ye find, at length, like eagles, some high nest?

Could I embody and unbosom now
That which is most within me, — could I wreak
My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw
Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings, strong or weak,
All that I would have sought, and all I seek,
Bear, know, feel, and yet breathe — into *one* word,
And that one word were Lightning, I would speak;
But as it is, I live and die unheard,
With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword.

The morn is up again, the dewy morn,
With breath all incense, and with cheek all bloom,
Laughing the clouds away with playful scorn,
And living as if earth contained no tomb, —
And glowing into day: we may resume
The march of our existence: and thus I,
Still on thy shores, fair Leman! may find room
And food for meditation, nor pass by
Much, that may give us pause, if pondered fittingly.

Clarens! sweet Clarens, birthplace of deep Love!
Thine air is the young breath of passionate thought;
Thy trees take root in Love; the snows above
The very Glaciers have his colors caught,
And sunset into rose-hues sees them wrought
By rays which sleep there lovingly; the rocks,
The permanent crags, tell here of Love, who sought
In them a refuge from the worldly shocks,
Which stir and sting the soul with hope that woos, then mocks.

Clarens! by heavenly feet thy paths are trod,—
Undying Love's, who here ascends a throne
To which the steps are mountains; where the god
Is a pervading life and light,—so shown
Not on those summits solely, nor alone
In the still cave and forest; o'er the flower
His eye is sparkling, and his breath hath blown,
His soft and summer breath, whose tender power
Passes the strength of storms in their most desolate hour.

All things are here of *him;* from the black pines,
Which are his shade on high, and the loud roar
Of torrents, where he listeneth, to the vines
Which slope his green path downward to the shore,
Where the bowed waters meet him, and adore,
Kissing his feet with murmurs; and the wood,
The covert of old trees, with trunks all hoar,
But light leaves, young as joy, stands where it stood,
Offering to him, and his, a populous solitude;

A populous solitude of bees and birds,
And fairy-formed and many colored things,
Who worship him with notes more sweet than words,
And innocently open their glad wings,
Fearless and full of life: the gush of springs,
And fall of lofty fountains, and the bend
Of stirring branches, and the bud which brings
The swiftest thought of beauty, here extend,
Mingling, and made by Love, unto one mighty end.

He who hath loved not, here would learn that lore,
And make his heart a spirit; he who knows
That tender mystery, will love the more;
For this is Love's recess, where vain men's woes,
And the world's waste, have driven him far from those,
For 't is his nature to advance or die;
He stands not still, but or decays, or grows
Into a boundless blessing, which may vie
With the immortal lights, in its eternity!

'T was not for fiction chose Rousseau this spot,
Peopling it with affections; but he found
It was the scene which Passion must allot
To the mind's purified beings; 't was the ground
Where early Love his Psyche's zone unbound,
And hallowed it with loveliness; 't is lone,
And wonderful, and deep, and hath a sound,
And sense, and sight of sweetness; here the Rhone
Hath spread himself a couch, the Alps have reared a throne.

Lausanne! and Ferney! ye have been the abodes
Of names which unto you bequeathed a name;
Mortals, who sought and found, by dangerous roads,
A path to perpetuity of fame:
They were gigantic minds, and their steep aim
Was, Titan-like, on daring doubts to pile
Thoughts which should call down thunder, and the flame
Of Heaven again assailed, if Heaven the while
On man and man's research could deign do more than smile.

The one was fire and fickleness, a child
Most mutable in wishes, but in mind
A wit as various,—gay, grave, sage, or wild,—
Historian, bard, philosopher, combined;

He multiplied himself among mankind,
The Proteus of their talents: But his own
Breathed most in ridicule,— which, as the wind,
Blew where it listed, laying all things prone,—
Now to o'erthrow a fool, and now to shake a throne.

The other, deep and slow, exhausting thought,
And hiving wisdom with each studious year,
In meditation dwelt, with learning wrought,
And shaped his weapon with an edge severe,
Sapping a solemn creed with solemn sneer;
The lord of irony,— that master-spell,
Which stung his foes to wrath, which grew from fear,
And doomed him to the zealot's ready Hell,
Which answers to all doubts so eloquently well.

Yet, peace be with their ashes,— for by them,
If merited, the penalty is paid;
It is not ours to judge,— far less condemn;
The hour must come when such things shall be made
Known unto all, or hope and dread allayed
By slumber, on one pillow in the dust,
Which, thus much we are sure, must lie decayed;
And when it shall revive, as is our trust,
'T will be to be forgiven, or suffer what is just.

But let me quit man's works, again to read
His Maker's, spread around me, and suspend
This page, which from my reveries I feed,
Until it seems prolonging without end.
The clouds above me to the white Alps tend,
And I must pierce them, and survey whate'er
May be permitted, as my steps I bend
To their most great and growing region, where
The earth to her embrace compels the powers of air.

* * *

I have not loved the world, nor the world me;
I have not flattered its rank breath, nor bowed
To its idolatries a patient knee,
Nor coined my cheek to smiles, nor cried aloud
In worship of an echo; in the crowd
They could not deem me one of such; I stood
Among them, but not of them; in a shroud
Of thoughts which were not their thoughts, and still could,
Had I not filled my mind, which thus itself subdued.

I have not loved the world, nor the world me,—
But let us part fair foes; I do believe,
Though I have found them not, that there may be
Words which are things, hopes which will not deceive,
And virtues which are merciful, nor weave
Snares for the failing; I would also deem
O'er others' griefs that some sincerely grieve;
That two, or one, are almost what they seem,
That goodness is no name, and happiness no dream

* * *

(1817)

From CHILDE HAROLD, CANTO IV

Oh Rome! my country! City of the soul!
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
Lone mother of dead empires! and control
In their shut breasts their petty misery.
What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see
The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way
O'er steps of broken thrones and temples, Ye!
Whose agonies are evils of a day—
A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

The Niobe of nations! there she stands
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe;
An empty urn within her withered hands,
Whose holy dust was scattered long ago;
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now;
The very sepulchers lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers: dost thou flow,
Old Tiber! through a marble wilderness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress.

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War, Flood, and Fire.

Have dealt upon the seven-hilled city's pride;
She saw her glories star by star expire,
And up the steep barbarian monarchs ride,
Where the car climbed the Capitol; far and wide
Temple and tower went down, nor left a site:
Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,
O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
And say, 'here was, or is,' where all is doubly night?

The double night of ages, and of her,
Night's daughter, Ignorance, hath wrapt and wrap
All round us; we but feel our way to err:
The ocean hath his chart, the stars their map,
And Knowledge spreads them on her ample lap;
But Rome is as the desert, where we steer
Stumbling o'er recollection; now we clap
Our hands, and cry 'Eureka!' it is clear —
When but some false mirage of ruin rises near.

Alas! the lofty city! and alas!
The trebly hundred triumphs! and the day
When Brutus made the dagger's edge surpass
The conqueror's sword in bearing fame away!
Alas, for Tully's voice, and Virgil's lay,
And Livy's pictured page! but these shall be
Her resurrection; all beside — decay.
Alas, for Earth, for never shall we see
That brightness in her eye she bore when Rome was free!

Oh thou, whose chariot rolled on Fortune's wheel,
Triumphant Sylla! Thou, who didst subdue
Thy country's foes ere thou wouldst pause to feel
The wrath of thy own wrongs, or reap the due
Of hoarded vengeance till thine eagles flew
O'er prostrate Asia; — thou, who with thy frown
Annihilated senates — Roman, too,
With all thy vices, for thou didst lay down
With an atoning smile a more than earthly crown —

The dictatorial wreath — couldst thou divine
To what would one day dwindle that which made
Thee more than mortal? and that so supine
By aught than Romans, Rome should thus be laid?
She who was named Eternal, and arrayed
Her warriors but to conquer — she who veiled
Earth with her haughty shadow, and displayed,
Until the o'er-canopied horizon failed,
Her rushing wings — Oh! she who was Almighty hailed.

Sylla was first of victors; but our own,
The sagest of usurpers, Cromwell! — he
Too swept off senates while he hewed the throne
Down to a block — immortal rebel! See
What crimes it costs to be a moment free,
And famous through all ages! but beneath
His fate the moral lurks of destiny;
His day of double victory and death
Beheld him win two realms, and happier, yield his breath.

The third of the same moon whose former course
Had all but crowned him, on the selfsame day
Deposed him gently from his throne of force,
And laid him with the earth's preceding clay.
And showed not Fortune thus how fame and sway,
And all we deem delightful, and consume
Our souls to compass through each arduous way,
Are in her eyes less happy than the tomb?
Were they but so in man's, how different were his doom!

And thou, dread statue? yet existent in
The austerest form of naked majesty,
Thou who beheldest, 'mid the assassin's din,
At thy bathed base the bloody Cæsar lie,
Folding his robe in dying dignity,
An offering to thine altar from the queen
Of gods and men, great Nemesis! did he die,
And thou, too, perish, Pompey? have ye been
Victors of countless kings, or puppets of a scene?

And thou, the thunder-stricken nurse of Rome!
She-wolf! whose brazen-imaged dugs impart
The milk of conquest yet within the dome
Where, as a monument of antique art

Thou standest: — Mother of the mighty heart,
Which the great founder sucked from thy wild teat,
Scorched by the Roman Jove's ethereal dart,
And thy limbs black with lightning — dost thou yet
Guard thine immortal cubs, nor thy fond charge forget?

Thou dost; but all thy foster-babes are dead —
The men of iron; and the world hath reared
Cities from out their sepulchers: men bled
In imitation of the things they feared,
And fought and conquered, and the same course steered,
At apish distance; but as yet none have,
Nor could, the same supremacy have neared,
Save one vain man, who is not in the grave,
But, vanquished by himself, to his own slaves a slave —

The fool of false dominion — and a kind
Of bastard Cæsar, following him of old
With steps unequal; for the Roman's mind
Was modeled in a less terrestrial mold,
With passions fiercer, yet a judgment cold,
And an immortal instinct which redeemed
The frailties of a heart so soft, yet bold,
Alcides with the distaff now he seemed
At Cleopatra's feet, — and now himself he beamed,

And came — and saw — and conquered! But the man
Who would have tamed his eagles down to flee,
Like a trained falcon, in the Gallic van,
Which he, in sooth, long led to victory,
With a deaf heart, which never seemed to be
A listener to itself, was strangely framed;
With but one weakest weakness — vanity,
Coquettish in ambition, still he aimed —
At what? can he avouch or answer what he claimed?

And would be all or nothing — nor could wait
For the sure grave to level him; few years
Had fixed him with the Cæsars in his fate,
On whom we tread: For *this* the conqueror rears
The arch of triumph; and for this the tears
And blood of earth flow on as they have flowed,
An universal deluge, which appears
Without an ark for wretched man's abode,
And ebbs but to reflow! Renew thy rainbow, God!

What from this barren being do we reap?
Our senses narrow, and our reason frail,
Life short, and truth a gem which loves the deep,
And all things weighed in custom's falsest scale;
Opinion an omnipotence, — whose veil
Mantles the earth with darkness, until right
And wrong are accidents, and men grow pale
Lest their own judgments should become too bright,
And their free thoughts be crimes, and earth have too much light.

And thus they plod in sluggish misery,
Rotting from sire to son, and age to age,
Proud of their trampled nature, and so die,
Bequeathing their hereditary rage
To the new race of inborn slaves, who wage
War for their chains, and rather than be free,
Bleed gladiator-like, and still engage
Within the same arena where they see
Their fellows fall before, like leaves of the same tree.

I speak not of men's creeds — they rest between
Man and his Maker — but of things allowed,
Averred, and known, and daily, hourly seen —
The yoke that is upon us doubly bowed,
And the intent of tyranny avowed,
The edict of Earth's rulers, who are grown
The apes of him who humbled once the proud,
And shook them from their slumbers on the throne;
Too glorious, were this all his mighty arm had done.

Can tyrants but by tyrants conquered be,
And Freedom find no champion and no child
Such as Columbia saw arise when she
Sprung forth a Pallas, armed and undefiled?
Or must such minds be nourished in the wild,
Deep in the unpruned forest 'midst the roar
Of cataracts, where nursing Nature smiled

On infant Washington? Has earth no more
Such seeds within her breast, or Europe no such shore?

But France got drunk with blood to vomit crime,
And fatal have her Saturnalia been
To Freedom's cause, in every age and clime;
Because the deadly days which we have seen,
And vile Ambition, that built up between
Man and his hopes an adamantine wall,
And the base pageant last upon the scene,
Are grown the pretext for the eternal thrall
Which nips life's tree, and dooms man's worst — his second fall.

Yet, Freedom! yet thy banner, torn, but flying,
Streams, like the thunder-storm *against* the wind;
Thy trumpet voice, though broken now and dying,
The loudest still the tempest leaves behind;
Thy tree hath lost its blossoms, and the rind,
Chopped by the axe, looks rough and little worth,
But the sap lasts,— and still the seed we find
Sown deep, even in the bosom of the North;
So shall a better spring less bitter fruit bring forth.

There is a stern round tower of other days,
Firm as a fortress, with its fence of stone,
Such as an army's baffled strength delays,
Standing with half its battlements alone,
And with two thousand years of ivy grown,
The garland of eternity, where wave
The green leaves over all by time o'erthrown: —
What was this tower of strength? within its cave
What treasure lay so locked, so hid? — A woman's grave.

But who was she, the lady of the dead,
Tombed in a palace? Was she chaste and fair?
Worthy a king's or more — a Roman's bed?
What race of chiefs and heroes did she bear?
What daughter of her beauties was the heir?
How lived, how loved, how died she? Was she not
So honored — and conspicuously there,
Where meaner relics must not dare to rot,
Placed to commemorate a more than mortal lot?

Was she as those who love their lords, or they
Who love the lords of others? such have been
Even in the olden time, Rome's annals say.
Was she a matron of Cornelia's mien,
Or the light air of Egypt's graceful queen,
Profuse of joy — or 'gainst it did she war,
Inveterate in virtue? Did she lean
To the soft side of the heart, or wisely bar
Love from amongst her griefs? — for such the affections are.

Perchance she died in youth: it may be bowed
With woes far heavier than the ponderous tomb
That weighed upon her gentle dust, a cloud
Might gather o'er her beauty, and a gloom
In her dark eye, prophetic of the doom
Heaven gives its favorites — early death; yet shed
A sunset charm around her, and illume
With hectic light, the Hesperus of the dead,
Of her consuming cheek the autumnal leaf-like red.

Perchance she died in age — surviving all,
Charms, kindred, children — with the silver gray
On her long tresses, which might yet recall,
It may be, still a something of the day
When they were braided, and her proud array
And lovely form were envied, praised, and eyed
By Rome — But whither would Conjecture stray?
Thus much alone we know — Metella died,
The wealthiest Roman's wife: Behold his love or pride!

I know not why — but standing thus by thee
It seems as if I had thine inmate known.
Thou Tomb! and other days come back to me
With recollected music, though the tone
Is changed and solemn, like a cloudy groan
Of dying thunder on the distant wind;

Yet could I seat me by this ivied stone
Till I had bodied forth the heated mind
Forms from the floating wreck which Ruin leaves behind;

And from the planks, far shattered o'er the rocks,
Built me a little bark of hope, once more
To battle with the ocean and the shocks
Of the loud breakers, and the ceaseless roar
Which rushes on the solitary shore
Where all lies foundered that was ever dear:
But could I gather from the wave-worn store
Enough for my rude boat, where should I steer?
There woos no home, nor hope, nor life, save what is here.

Then let the winds howl on! their harmony
Shall henceforth by my music, and the night
The sound shall temper with the owlets' cry,
As I now hear them, in the fading light
Dim o'er the bird of darkness' native site,
Answering each other on the Palatine,
With their large eyes, all glistening gray and bright,
And sailing pinions.— Upon such a shrine
What are our petty griefs? — let me not number mine.

Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower grown
Matted and massed together, hillocks heaped
On what were chambers, arch crushed, column strown
In fragments, choked up vaults, and frescoes steeped
In subterranean damps, where the owl peeped,
Deeming it midnight: — Temples, baths, or halls?
Pronounce who can; for all that Learning reaped
From her research hath been, that these are walls —
Behold the Imperial Mount! 'tis thus the mighty falls.

There is the moral of all human tales;
'T is but the same rehearsal of the past,
First Freedom and then Glory — when that fails,
Wealth, vice, corruption,— barbarism at last,
And history, with all her volumes vast,
Hath but *one* page — 't is better written here,
Where gorgeous Tyranny hath thus amassed
All treasures, all delights, that eye or ear,
Heart, soul could seek, tongue ask — Away with words! draw near,

Admire, exult, despise, laugh, weep,— for here
There is such matter for all feeling: — Man!
Thou pendulum betwixt a smile and tear,
Ages and realms are crowded in this span,
This mountain, whose obliterated plan
The pyramid of empires pinnacled,
Of Glory's gewgaws shining in the van
Till the sun's rays with added flame were filled!
Where are its golden roofs? where those who dared to build?

Tully was not so eloquent as thou,
Thou nameless column with the buried base!
What are the laurels of the Cæsar's brow?
Crown me with ivy from his dwelling-place
Whose arch or pillar meets me in the face,
Titus or Trajan's? No — 't is that of Time;
Triumph, arch, pillar, all he doth displace
Scoffing; and apostolic statues climb
To crush the imperial urn, whose ashes slept sublime,

Buried in air, the deep blue sky of Rome,
And looking to the stars: they had contained
A spirit which with these would find a home,
The last of those who o'er the whole earth reigned,
The Roman globe, for after none sustained,
But yielded back his conquests: — he was more
Than a mere Alexander, and, unstained
With household blood and wine, serenely wore
His sovereign virtues — still we Trajan's name adore.

* * *

Arches on arches! as it were that Rome,
Collecting the chief trophies of her line,
Would build up all her triumphs in one dome,
Her Coliseum stands; the moonbeams shine
As 't were its natural torches, for divine
Should be the light which streams here, to illume
This long-explored but still exhaustless mine

Of contemplation; and the azure gloom
Of an Italian night, where the deep skies assume
Hues which have words, and speak to ye of heaven,
Floats o'er this vast and wondrous monument,
And shadows forth its glory. There is given
Unto the things of earth, which Time hath bent,
A spirit's feeling, and where he hath leant
His hand, but broke his scythe, there is a power
And magic in the ruined battlement,
For which the palace of the present hour
Must yield its pomp, and wait till ages are its dower.

Oh, Time! the beautifier of the dead,
Adorner of the ruin, comforter
And only healer when the heart hath bled;
Time! the corrector where our judgments err,
The test of truth, love — sole philosopher,
For all beside are sophists — from thy thrift,
Which never loses though it doth defer —
Time, the avenger! unto thee I lift
My hands, and eyes, and heart, and crave of thee a gift:

Amidst this wreck, where thou hast made a shrine
And temple more divinely desolate,
Among thy mightier offerings here are mine,
Ruins of years, though few, yet full of fate:
If thou hast ever seen me too elate,
Hear me not; but if calmly I have borne
Good, and reserved my pride against the hate
Which shall not whelm me, let me not have worn
This iron in my soul in vain — shall *they* not mourn?

And thou, who never yet of human wrong
Left the unbalanced scale, great Nemesis!
Here, where the ancient paid thee homage long —
Thou, who didst call the Furies from the abyss,
And round Orestes bade them howl and hiss
For that unnatural retribution — just,
Had it but been from hands less near — in this
Thy former realm, I call thee from the dust!
Dost thou not hear my heart? — Awake! thou shalt, and must.

It is not that I may not have incurred
For my ancestral faults or mine the wound
I bleed withal, and had it been conferred
With a just weapon, it had flowed unbound;
But now my blood shall not sink in the ground:
To thee I do devote it — *thou* shalt take
The vengeance, which shall yet be sought and found
Which if *I* have not taken for the sake —
But let that pass — I sleep, but thou shalt yet awake.

And if my voice break forth, 't is not that now
I shrink from what is suffered: let him speak
Who hath beheld decline upon my brow,
Or seen my mind's convulsion leave it weak;
But in this page a record will I seek.
Not in the air shall these my words disperse,
Though I be ashes; a far hour shall wreak
The deep prophetic fulness of this verse,
And pile on human heads the mountain of my curse!

That curse shall be Forgiveness,— Have I not —
Hear me, my mother Earth! behold it, Heaven! —
Have I not had to wrestle with my lot?
Have I not suffered things to be forgiven?
Have I not had my brain seared, my heart riven,
Hopes sapped, name blighted, Life's life lied away?
And only not to desperation driven,
Because not altogether of such clay
As rots into the souls of those whom I survey.

From mighty wrongs to petty perfidy
Have I not seen what human things could do?
From the loud roar of foaming calumny
To the small whisper of the as paltry few,
And subtler venom of the reptile crew,
The Janus glance of whose significant eye,
Learning to lie with silence, would *seem* true,

And without utterance, save the shrug or sigh,
Deal round to happy fools its speechless obloquy.

But I have lived, and have not lived in vain:
My mind may lose its force, my blood its fire,
And my frame perish even in conquering pain;
But there is that within me which shall tire
Torture and Time, and breathe when I expire;
Something unearthly, which they deem not of,
Like the remembered tone of a mute lyre,
Shall on their softened spirits sink, and move
In hearts all rocky now the late remorse of love.

The seal is set.— Now welcome, thou dread power!
Nameless, yet thus omnipotent, which here
Walk'st in the shadow of the midnight hour
With a deep awe, yet all distinct from fear;
Thy haunts are ever where the dead walls rear
Their ivy mantles, and the solemn scene
Derives from thee a sense so deep and clear
That we become a part of what has been,
And grow unto the spot, all-seeing but unseen.

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,
In murmured pity, or loud-roared applause,
As man was slaughtered by his fellow man.
And wherefore slaughtered? wherefore, but because
Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws.
And the imperial pleasure.— Wherefore not?
What matters where we fall to fill the maws
Of worms.— On battle-plains or listed spot?
Both are but theaters where the chief actors rot.

I see before me the Gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand — his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his drooped head sinks gradually low —
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now
The arena swims around him — he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the wretch who won.

He heard it, but he heeded not — his eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far away;
He recked not of the life he lost nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There were his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother — he, their sire,
Butchered to make a Roman holiday —
All this rushed with his blood — Shall he expire
And unavenged? Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!

But here, where Murder breathed her bloody steam;
And here, where buzzing nations choked the ways,
And roared or murmured like a mountain stream
Dashing or winding as its torrent strays;
Here, where the Roman millions' blame or praise
Was death or life, the playthings of a crowd,
My voice sounds much — and fall the stars' faint rays
On the arena void — seats crushed — walls bowed —
And galleries, where my steps seem echoes strangely loud.

A ruin — yet what ruin! — from its mass
Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been reared;
Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,
And marvel where the spoil could have appeared.
Hath it indeed been plundered, or but cleared?
Alas! developed, opens the decay,
When the colossal fabric's form is neared:
It will not bear the brightness of the day,
Which streams too much on all, years, man have reft away.

But when the rising moon begins to climb
Its topmost arch, and gently pauses there;
When the stars twinkle through the loops of time,
And the low night-breeze waves along the air
The garland-forest, which the gray walls wear,
Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar's head;
When the light shines serene but doth not glare,

Then in this magic circle raise the dead:
Heroes have trod this spot—'t is on their dust ye tread.

'While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;
When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall,
And when Rome falls—the World.' From our own land
Thus spake the pilgrims o'er this mighty wall
In Saxon times, which we are wont to call
Ancient; and these three mortal things are still
On their foundations, and unaltered all;
Rome and her Ruin past Redemption's skill,
The world, the same wide den—of thieves, or what ye will.

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(1818)

From THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

In the first year of freedom's second dawn
Died George the Third; although no tyrant, one
Who shielded tyrants, till each sense withdrawn
Left him nor mental nor external sun;
A better farmer ne'er brushed dew from lawn,
A worse king never left a realm undone!
He died—but left his subjects still behind,
One half as mad—and t'other no less blind.

He died! his death made no great stir on earth:
His burial made some pomp; there was profusion
Of velvet, gilding, brass, and no great dearth
Of aught but tears—save those shed by collusion.
For these things may be bought at their true worth;
Of elegy there was the due infusion—
Bought also; and the torches, cloaks and banners,
Heralds, and relics of old Gothic manners,

Formed a sepulchral melodrame. Of all
The fools who flocked to swell or see the show,
Who cared about the corpse? The funeral
Made the attraction, and the black the woe.

There throbbed not there a thought which pierced the pall;
And when the gorgeous coffin was laid low,
It seemed the mockery of hell to fold
The rottenness of eighty years in gold.

So mix his body with the dust! It might
Return to what it *must* far sooner, were
The natural compound left alone to fight
Its way back into earth, and fire, and air;
But the unnatural balsams merely blight
What nature made him at his birth, as bare
As the mere million's base unmummied clay—
Yet all his spices but prolong decay.

He 's dead—and upper earth with him has done;
He 's buried; save the undertaker's bill,
Or lapidary scrawl, the world is gone
For him, unless he left a German will;
But where 's the proctor who will ask his son?
In whom his qualities are reigning still,
Except that household virtue, most uncommon,
Of constancy to a bad, ugly woman.

'God save the king!' It is a large economy
In God to save the like; but if he will
Be saving, all the better; for not one am I
Of those who think damnation better still:
I hardly know too if not quite alone am I
In this small hope of bettering future ill
By circumscribing, with some slight restriction,
The eternity of hell's hot jurisdiction.

I know this is unpopular; I know
'T is blasphemous; I know one may be damned
For hoping no one else may e'er be so;
I know my catechism; I know we 've crammed
With the best doctrines till we quite o'erflow;
I know that all save England's church have shammed,
And that the other twice two hundred churches
And synagogues have made a *damned* bad purchase.

God help us all! God help me too! I am,
God knows, as helpless as the devil can wish,

And not a whit more difficult to damn,
Than is to bring to land a late-hooked fish,
Or to the butcher to purvey the lamb;
Not that I'm fit for such a noble dish,
As one day will be that immortal fry
Of almost everybody born to die.

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate,
And nodded o'er his keys; when, lo! there came
A wondrous noise he had not heard of late —
A rushing sound of wind, and stream and flame;
In short, a roar of things extremely great,
Which would have made aught save a saint exclaim;
But he, with first a start and then a wink,
Said, 'There's another star gone out, I think!'

But ere he could return to his repose,
A cherub flapped his right wing o'er his eyes —
At which St. Peter yawned, and rubbed his nose:
'Saint porter,' said the angel, 'prithee rise!'
Waving a goodly wing, which glowed, as glows
An earthly peacock's tail, with heavenly dyes:
To which the saint replied, 'Well, what's the matter?
Is Lucifer come back with all this clatter?'

'No,' quoth the cherub; 'George the Third is dead.'
'And who *is* George the Third?' replied the apostle:
'*What George? what Third?*' 'The king of England,' said
The angel. 'Well! he won't find kings to jostle
Him on his way; but does he wear his head?
Because the last we saw here had a tussle,
And ne'er would have got into heaven's good graces,
Had he not flung his head in all our faces.

'He was, if I remember, king of France;
That head of his, which could not keep a crown
On earth, yet ventured in my face to advance
A claim to those of martyrs — like my own;
If I had had my sword, as I had once
When I cut ears off, I had cut him down;
But having but my *keys*, and not my brand,
I only knock'd his head from out his hand.

'And then he set up such a headless howl,
That all the saints came out and took him in;
And there he sits by St. Paul, cheek by jowl;
That fellow Paul — the parvenu! The skin
Of St. Bartholomew, which makes his cowl
In heaven, and upon earth redeemed his sin,
So as to make a martyr, never sped
Better than did this weak and wooden head.

'But had it come up here upon its shoulders,
There would have been a different tale to tell:
The fellow-feeling in the saints' beholders
Seems to have acted on them like a spell,
And so this very foolish head heaven solders
Back on its trunk: it may be very well,
And seems the custom here, to overthrow
Whatever has been wisely done below.'

The angel answered, 'Peter! do not pout:
The king who comes has head and all entire,
And never knew much what it was about —
He did as doth the puppet — by its wire,
And will be judged like all the rest, no doubt:
My business and your own is not to inquire
Into such matters, but to mind our cue —
Which is to act as we are bid to do.'

While thus they spake, the angelic caravan,
Arriving like a rush of mighty wind,
Cleaving the fields of space, as doth the swan
Some silver stream (say Ganges, Nile or Inde,
Or Thames, or Tweed), and 'midst them an old man
With an old soul, and both extremely blind,
Halted before the gate, and in his shroud
Seated their fellow traveler on a cloud.

But bringing up the rear of this bright host
A Spirit of a different aspect waved
His wings, like thunder-clouds above some coast
Whose barren beach with frequent wrecks is paved;
His brow was like the deep when tempest-tossed;
Fierce and unfathomable thoughts engraved
Eternal wrath on his immortal face,
And *where* he gazed a gloom pervaded space.

As he drew near, he gazed upon the gate
Ne'er to be entered more by him or Sin,
With such a glance of supernatural hate,
As made Saint Peter wish himself within;
He pattered with his keys at a great rate,
And sweated through his apostolic skin:
Of course his perspiration was but ichor,
Or some such other spiritual liquor.

The very cherubs huddled all together,
Like birds when soars the falcon; and they felt
A tingling to the tip of every feather,
And formed a circle like Orion's belt
Around their poor old charge; who scarce knew whither
His guards had led him, though they gently dealt
With royal manes (for by many stories,
And true, we learn the angels all are Tories).

As things were in this posture, the gate flew
Asunder, and the flashing of its hinges
Flung over space an universal hue
Of many-colored flame, until its tinges
Reached even our speck of earth, and made a new
Aurora borealis spread its fringes
O'er the North Pole; the same seen, when ice-bound,
By Captain Parry's crew, in 'Melville's Sound.'

And from the gate thrown open issued beaming
A beautiful and mighty Thing of Light,
Radiant with glory, like a banner streaming
Victorious from some world-o'erthrowing fight:
My poor comparisons must needs be teeming
With earthly likenesses, for here the night
Of clay obscures our best conceptions, saving
Johanna Southcote, or Bob Southey raving.

'T was the archangel Michael; all men know
The make of angels and archangels, since
There 's scarce a scribbler has not one to show,
From the fiends' leader to the angels' prince;
There also are some altar-pieces, though
I really can't say that they much evince
One's inner notions of immortal spirits;
But let the connoisseurs explain *their* merits.

Michael flew forth in glory and in good;
A goodly work of him from whom all glory
And good arise; the portal past — he stood;
Before him the young cherubs and saints hoary —
(I say *young*, begging to be understood
By looks, not years; and should be very sorry
To state, they were not older than St. Peter,
But merely that they seemed a little sweeter).

The cherubs and the saints bowed down before
That arch-angelic hierarch, the first
Of essences angelical, who wore
The aspect of a god; but this ne'er nursed
Pride in his heavenly bosom, in whose core
No thought, save for his Master's service, durst
Intrude, however glorified and high;
He knew him but the viceroy of the sky.

He and the somber, silent Spirit met —
They knew each other both for good and ill;
Such was their power, that neither could forget
His former friend and future foe; but still
There was a high, immortal, proud regret
In either's eye, as if 't were less their will
Than destiny to make the eternal years
Their date of war, and their 'champ clos' the spheres.

But here they were in neutral space: we know
From Job, that Satan hath the power to pay
A heavenly visit thrice a year or so;
And that the 'sons of God,' like those of clay,

Must keep him company; and we might show
From the same book, in how polite a way
The dialogue is held between the Powers
Of Good and Evil — but 't would take up hours.

And this is not a theologic tract,
To prove with Hebrew and with Arabic,
If Job be allegory or a fact,
But a true narrative; and thus I pick
From out the whole but such and such an act
As sets aside the slightest thought of trick.
'T is every tittle true, beyond suspicion,
And accurate as any other vision.

The spirits were in neutral space, before
The gate of heaven; like eastern thresholds is
The place where Death's grand cause is argued o'er,
And souls despatched to that world or to this;
And therefore Michael and the other wore
A civil aspect: though they did not kiss,
Yet still between his Darkness and his Brightness
There passed a mutual glance of great politeness.

The Archangel bowed, not like a modern beau,
But with a graceful Oriental bend,
Pressing one radiant arm just where below
The heart in good men is supposed to tend;
He turned as to an equal, not too low,
But kindly; Satan met his ancient friend
With more hauteur, as might an old Castilian
Poor noble meet a mushroom rich civilian.

He merely bent his diabolic brow
An instant; and then raising it, he stood
In act to assert his right or wrong, and show
Cause why King George by no means could or should
Make out a case to be exempt from woe
Eternal, more than other kings, endued
With better sense and hearts, whom history mentions,
Who long have 'paved hell with their good intentions.'

Michael began: 'What wouldst thou with this man,
Now dead, and brought before the Lord? What ill
Hath he wrought since his mortal race began,
That thou canst claim him? Speak! and do thy will,
If it be just: if in this earthly span
He hath been greatly failing to fulfil
His duties as a king and mortal, say,
And he is thine; if not, let him have way.'

'Michael!' replied the Prince of Air, 'even here,
Before the Gate of him thou servest, must
I claim my subject: and will make appear
That as he was my worshipper in dust,
So shall he be in spirit, although dear
To thee and thine, because nor wine nor lust
Were of his weaknesses; yet on the throne
He reigned o'er millions to serve me alone.

'Look to *our* earth, or rather *mine;* it was,
Once, more thy Master's: but I triumph not
In this poor planet's conquest; nor, alas!
Need he thou servest envy me my lot:
With all the myriads of bright worlds which pass
In worship round him, he may have forgot
Yon weak creation of such paltry things:
I think few worth damnation save their kings,—

'And these but as a kind of quit-rent, to
Assert my right as lord: and even had
I such an inclination, it were (as you
Well know) superfluous; they are grown so bad,
That hell has nothing better left to do
Than leave them to themselves: so much more mad
And evil by their own internal curse,
Heaven cannot make them better, nor I worse.

'Look to the earth, I said, and say again:
When this old, blind, mad, helpless, weak, poor worm
Began in youth's first bloom and flush to reign,
The world and he both wore a different form,

And much of earth and all the watery plain
Of ocean called him king: through many a storm
His isles had floated on the abyss of time;
For the rough virtues chose them for their clime.

'He came to his scepter young; he leaves it old:
Look to the state in which he found his realm,
And left it; and his annals too behold,
How to a minion first he gave the helm;
How grew upon his heart a thirst for gold,
The beggar's vice, which can but overwhelm
The meanest hearts; and for the rest, but glance
Thine eye along America and France.

''T is true, he was a tool from first to last
(I have the workmen safe), but as a tool
So let him be consumed. From out the past
Of ages, since mankind have known the rule
Of monarchs — from the bloody rolls amassed
Of sin and slaughter — from the Cæsar's school,
Take the worst pupil; and produce a reign
More drenched with gore, more cumbered with the slain.

'He ever warred with freedom and the free:
Nations as men, home subjects, foreign foes,
So that they uttered the word 'Liberty!'
Found George the Third their first opponent. Whose
History was ever stained as his will be
With national and individual woes?
I grant his household abstinence; I grant
His neutral virtues, which most monarchs want;

'I know he was a constant consort; own
He was a decent sire, and middling lord.
All this is much, and most upon a throne;
As temperance, if at Apicius' board,
Is more than at an anchorite's supper shown.
I grant him all the kindest can accord;
And this was well for him, but not for those
Millions who found him what oppression chose.

'The New World shook him off; the Old yet groans
Beneath what he and his prepared, if not
Completed: he leaves heirs on many thrones
To all his vices, without what begot
Compassion for him — his tame virtues; drones
Who sleep, or despots who have now forgot
A lesson which shall be re-taught them, wake
Upon the thrones of earth; but let them quake!

'Five millions of the primitive, who hold
The faith which makes ye great on earth implored
A *part* of that vast *all* they held of old,—
Freedom to worship — not alone your Lord.
Michael, but you, and you, Saint Peter! cold
Must be your souls, if you have not abhorred
The foe to Catholic participation
In all the license of a Christian nation.

'True! he allowed them to pray God; but as
A consequence of prayer, refused the law
Which would have placed them upon the same base
With those who did not hold the saints in awe.'
But here Saint Peter started from his place,
And cried, 'You may the prisoner withdraw:
Ere heaven shall ope her portals to this Guelph,
While I am guard, may I be damned myself!

'Sooner will I with Cerberus exchange
My office (and *his* is no sinecure)
Than see this royal Bedlam bigot range
The azure fields of heaven, of that be sure!'
'Saint!' replied Satan, 'you do well to avenge
The wrongs he made your satellites endure;
And if to this exchange you should be given,
I 'll try to coax *our* Cerberus up to heaven!'

Here Michael interposed: 'Good saint! and devil!

Pray, not so fast; you both outrun discretion.
Saint Peter! you were wont to be more civil!
Satan, excuse this warmth of his expression,
And condescension to the vulgar's level;
Even saints sometimes forget themselves in session.
Have you got more to say?'—'No.'—'If you please,
I'll trouble you to call your witnesses.'

(1822)

* * *

From DON JUAN, CANTO III

THE ISLES OF GREECE

The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,—
Where Delos rose, and Phœbus sprung!
Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their sun, is set.

The Scian and the Teian muse,
The hero's harp, the lover's lute,
Have found the fame your shores refuse:
Their place of birth alone is mute
To sounds which echo further west
Than your sires' 'Islands of the Blest.'

The mountains look on Marathon—
And Marathon looks on the sea;
And musing there an hour alone,
I dreamed that Greece might still be free;
For standing on the Persian's grave,
I could not deem myself a slave.

A king sate on the rocky brow
Which looks o'er sea-born Salamis;
And ships, by thousands, lay below,
And men in nations;—all were his!
He counted them at break of day—
And when the sun set, where were they?

And where are they? and where art thou,
My country? On thy voiceless shore
The heroic lay is tuneless now—
The heroic bosom beats no more!
And must thy lyre, so long divine,
Degenerate into hands like mine?

'T is something, in the dearth of fame,
Though linked among a fettered race,
To feel at least a patriot's shame,
Even as I sing, suffuse my face;
For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear.

Must *we* but weep o'er days more blest?
Must *we* but blush?—Our fathers bled.
Earth! render back from out thy breast
A remnant of our Spartan dead!
Of the three hundred grant but three,
To make a new Thermopylæ!

What, silent still? and silent all?
Ah! no;—the voices of the dead
Sound like a distant torrent's fall,
And answer, 'Let one living head,
But one arise,—we come, we come!'
'T is but the living who are dumb.

In vain—in vain: strike other chords:
Fill high the cup with Samian wine!
Leave battles to the Turkish hordes,
And shed the blood of Scio's vine!
Hark! rising to the ignoble call—
How answers each bold Bacchanal!

You have the Pyrrhic dance as yet:
Where is the Pyrrhic phalanx gone?
Of two such lessons, why forget
The nobler and the manlier one?
You have the letters Cadmus gave—
Think ye he meant them for a slave?

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
We will not think of themes like these!
It made Anacreon's song divine;
He served—but served Polycrates—
A tyrant; but our masters then
Were still, at least, our countrymen.

The tyrant of the Chersonese
Was freedom's best and bravest friend;
That tyrant was Miltiades!
Oh! that the present hour would lend
Another despot of the kind!
Such chains as his were sure to bind.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
On Suli's rock, and Parga's shore,
Exists the remnant of a line
Such as the Doric mothers bore;
And there, perhaps, some seed is sown,
The Heracleidan blood might own.

Trust not for freedom to the Franks,
They have a king who buys and sells;
In native swords and native ranks,
The only hope of courage dwells:
But Turkish force, and Latin fraud,
Would break your shield, however broad.

Fill high the bowl with Samian wine!
Our virgins dance beneath the shade —
I see their glorious black eyes shine;
But gazing on each glowing maid,
My own the burning tear-drop laves,
To think such breasts must suckle slaves.

Place me on Sunium's marbled steep,
Where nothing, save the waves and I,
May hear our mutual murmurs sweep;
There, swan-like, let me sing and die:
A land of slaves shall ne'er be mine —
Dash down yon cup of Samian wine!

Thus sung, or would, or could, or should have sung,
The modern Greek, in tolerable verse:
If not like Orpheus quite, when Greece was young,
Yet in these times he might have done much worse:
His strain displayed some feeling — right or wrong;
And feeling, in a poet, is the source
Of others' feeling; but they are such liars,
And take all colors — like the hands of dyers.

But words are things, and a small drop of ink,
Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces
That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think;
'T is strange, the shortest letter which man uses
Instead of speech, may form a lasting link
Of ages; to what straits old Time reduces
Frail man when paper — even a rag like this,
Survives himself, his tomb, and all that 's his!

And when his bones are dust, his grave a blank,
His station, generation, even his nation,
Become a thing, or nothing, save to rank
In chronological commemoration,
Some dull MS. oblivion long has sank.
Or graven stone found in a barrack's station
In digging the foundation of a closet,
May turn his name up, as a rare deposit.

And glory long has made the sages smile;
'T is something, nothing, words, illusion wind —
Depending more upon the historian's style
Than on the name a person leaves behind:
Troy owes to Homer what whist owes to Hoyle:
The present century was growing blind
To the great Marlborough's skill in giving knocks,
Until his late Life by Archdeacon Coxe.

Milton 's the prince of poets — so we say;
A little heavy, but no less divine:
An independent being in his day —
Learned, pious, temperate in love and wine;
But his life falling into Johnson's way,
We 're told this great high priest of all the Nine
Was whipt at college — a harsh sire — odd spouse,
For the first Mrs. Milton left his house.

All these are, *certes*, entertaining facts,
Like Shakspere's stealing deer, Lord Bacon's bribes;
Like Titus' youth, and Cæsar's earliest acts;
Like Burns (whom Doctor Currie well describes);
Like Cromwell's pranks: — but although truth exacts
These amiable descriptions from the scribes,
As most essential to their hero's story,
They do not much contribute to his glory.

All are not moralists, like Southey, when
He prated to the world of 'Pantisocracy:'
Or Wordsworth unexcised, unhired, who then
Seasoned his peddler poems with democracy;
Or Coleridge, long before his flighty pen
Let to the Morning Post its aristocracy;
When he and Southey, following the same path,
Espoused two partners (milliners of Bath).

Such names at present cut a convict figure,
The very Botany Bay in moral geography:
Their royal treason, renegado rigor,
Are good manure for their more bare biography.
Wordsworth's last quarto, by the way, is bigger
Than any since the birthday of typography:

A drowsy frowzy poem, called the 'Excursion,'
Writ in a manner which is my aversion.
* * *
T' our tale.—The feast was over, the slaves gone,
The dwarfs and dancing girls had all retired:
The Arab lore and poet's song were done,
And every sound of revelry expired;
The lady and her lover, left alone.
The rosy flood of twilight's sky admired:
Ave Maria! o'er the earth and sea,
That heavenliest hour of Heaven is worthiest thee!

Ave Maria! blessed be the hour!
The time, the clime, the spot, where I so oft
Have felt that moment in its fullest power
Sink o'er the earth so beautiful and soft,
While swung the deep bell in the distant tower,
Or the faint dying day-hymn stole aloft,
And not a breath crept through the rosy air,
And yet the forest leaves seemed stirred with prayer.

Ave Maria! 't is the hour of prayer!
Ave Maria! 't is the hour of love!
Ave Maria! may our spirits dare
Look up to thine and to thy Son's above!
Ave Maria! oh, that face so fair!
Those downcast eyes beneath the Almighty dove—
What though 't is but a pictured image strike,
That painting is no idol,—'t is too like.

Some kinder casuists are pleased to say,
In nameless print—that I have no devotion;
But set those persons down with me to pray,
And you shall see who has the properest notion
Of getting into heaven the shortest way;
My altars are the mountains and the ocean,
Earth, air, stars,—all that springs from the great Whole,
Who hath produced, and will receive the soul.

Sweet hour of twilight!—in the solitude
Of the pine forest and the silent shore
Which bounds Ravenna's immemorial wood,
Rooted where once the Adrian wave flowed o'er,
To where the last Cæsarean fortress stood,
Evergreen forest! which Boccaccio's lore
And Dryden's lay made haunted ground to me,
How have I loved the twilight hour and thee!

The shrill cicalas, people of the pine,
Making their summer lives one ceaseless song,
Were the sole echoes, save my steed's and mine,
And vesper bell's that rose the boughs along;
The specter huntsman of Onesti's line,
His hell-dogs, and their chase, and the fair throng
Which learned from this example not to fly
From a true lover, shadowed my mind's eye.

O Hesperus! thou bringest all good things—
Home to the weary, to the hungry cheer,
To the young bird the parent's brooding wings,
The welcome stall to the o'erlabored steer;
Whate'er of peace about our hearthstone clings,
Whate'er our household gods protect of dear,
Are gathered round us by thy look of rest;
Thou bring'st the child, too, to the mother's breast.

Soft hour! which wakes the wish and melts the heart
Of those who sail the seas, on the first day
When they from their sweet friends are torn apart;
Or fills with love the pilgrim on his way
As the far bell of vesper makes him start,
Seeming to weep the dying day's decay;
Is this a fancy which our reason scorns?
Ah! surely nothing dies but something mourns!

When Nero perished by the justest doom
Which ever the destroyer yet destroyed,
Amidst the roar of liberated Rome,
Of nations freed, and the world overjoyed,
Some hands unseen strewed flowers upon his tomb:
Perhaps the weakness of a heart not void

Of feeling for some kindness done, when power
Had left the wretch an uncorrupted hour.

But I'm digressing; what on earth has Nero,
Or any such like sovereign buffoons,
To do with the transactions of my hero,
More than such madmen's fellow man — the moon's?
Sure my invention must be down at zero;
And I grown one of many 'wooden spoons'
Of verse (the name with which we Cantabs please
To dub the last of honors in degrees).

* * *

DON JUAN, CANTO IV

Nothing so difficult as a beginning
In poesy, unless perhaps the end;
For oftentimes, when Pegasus seems winning
The race, he sprains a wing, and down we tend,
Like Lucifer, when hurled from heaven for sinning;
Our sin the same, and hard as his to mend,
Being pride, which leads the mind to soar too far,
Till our own weakness shows us what we are.

But Time, which brings all beings to their level,
And sharp Adversity, will teach at last
Man, and — as we would hope — perhaps the devil,
That neither of their intellects are vast:
While youth's hot wishes in our red veins revel,
We know not this — the blood flows on too fast;
But as the torrent widens towards the ocean,
We ponder deeply on each past emotion.

As boy, I thought myself a clever fellow,
And wished that others held the same opinion;
They took it up when my days grew more mellow,
And other minds acknowledged my dominion:
Now my sere fancy 'falls into the yellow
Leaf,' and Imagination droops her pinion,
And the sad truth which hovers o'er my desk
Turns what was once romantic to burlesque.

And if I laugh at any mortal thing,
'T is that I may not weep; and if I weep,
'T is that our nature cannot always bring
Itself to apathy, for we must steep
Our hearts first in the depth of Lethe's spring,
Ere what we least wish to behold will sleep:
Thetis baptized her mortal son in Styx;
A mortal mother would on Lethe fix.

Some have accused me of a strange design
Against the creed and morals of the land,
And trace it in this poem every line:
I don't pretend that I quite understand
My own meaning when I would be *very* fine;
But the fact is, that I have nothing planned
Unless it were to be a moment merry,
A novel word in my vocabulary.

To the kind reader of our sober clime,
This way of writing will appear exotic:
Pulci was sire of the half-serious rhyme,
Who sang when chivalry was more Quixotic,
And reveled in the fancies of the time,
True knights, chaste dames, huge giants, kings despotic;
But all these, save the last, being obsolete,
I chose a modern subject as more meet.

How I have treated it, I do not know;
Perhaps no better than they have treated me
Who have imputed such designs as show
Not what they saw, but what they wished to see:
But if it gives them pleasure, be it so;
This is a liberal age, and thoughts are free:
Meantime Apollo plucks me by the ear,
And tells me to resume my story here.

* * *

Now pillowed cheek to cheek, in loving sleep,
Haidée and Juan their siesta took,
A gentle slumber, but it was not deep,
For ever and anon a something shook
Juan, and shuddering o'er his frame would creep;
And Haidée's sweet lips murmured like a brook

A wordless music, and her face so fair
Stirred with her dream, as rose-leaves with the air;

Or as the stirring of a deep clear stream
Within an Alpine hollow, when the wind
Walks o'er it, was she shaken by the dream,
The mystical usurper of the mind—
O'erpowering us to be whate'er may seem
Good to the soul which we no more can bind;
Strange state of being! (for 't is still to be)
Senseless to feel, and with sealed eyes to see.

She dreamed of being alone on the sea-shore,
Chained to a rock; she knew not how, but stir
She could not from the spot, and the loud roar
Grew, and each wave rose roughly, threatening her;
And o'er her upper lip they seemed to pour,
Until she sobbed for breath, and soon they were
Foaming o'er her lone head, so fierce and high—
Each broke to drown her, yet she could not die.

Anon—she was released; and then she strayed
O'er the sharp shingles with her bleeding feet,
And stumbled almost every step she made:
And something rolled before her in a sheet,
Which she must still pursue, howe'er afraid;
'T was white and indistinct, nor stopped to meet
Her glance or grasp, for still she gazed and grasped,
And ran, but it escaped her as she clasped.

The dream changed:—in a cave she stood, its walls
Were hung with marble icicles: the work
Of ages on its water-fretted halls,
Where waves might wash, and seals might breed and lurk;
Her hair was dripping, and the very balls
Of her black eyes seemed turned to tears, and mirk
The sharp rocks looked below each drop they caught,
Which froze to marble as it fell—she thought.

And wet, and cold, and lifeless, at her feet,
Pale as the foam that frothed on his dead brow,
Which she essayed in vain to clear (how sweet
Were once her cares, how idle seemed they now!)
Lay Juan, nor could aught renew the beat
Of his quenched heart; and the sea-dirges low
Rang in her sad ears like a mermaid's song,
And that brief dream appeared a life too long.

And gazing on the dead, she thought his face
Faded, or altered into something new—
Like to her father's features, till each trace
More like and like to Lambro's aspect grew—
With all his keen worn look and Grecian grace;
And starting, she awoke, and what to view?
O Powers of Heaven! what dark eye meets she there?
'T is—'t is her father's—fixed upon the pair!

Then shrieking, she arose, and shrieking fell,
With joy and sorrow, hope and fear, to see
Him whom she deemed a habitant where dwell
The ocean buried, risen from death, to be
Perchance the death of one she loved too well:
Dear as her father had been to Haidée,
It was a moment of that awful kind—
I have seen such—but must not call to mind.

Up Juan sprang to Haidée's bitter shriek,
And caught her falling, and from off the wall
Snatched down his sabre, in hot haste to wreak
Vengeance on him who was the cause of all;
Then Lambro, who till now forbore to speak,
Smiled scornfully, and said, 'Within my call,
A thousand scimitars await the word;
Put up, young man, put up your silly sword.'

And Haidée clung around him: 'Juan, 't is —
'T is Lambro —'t is my father! Kneel with me —
He will forgive us — yes — it must be — yes,
Oh, dearest father, in this agony
Of pleasure and of pain — even while I kiss
Thy garment's hem with transport, can it be
That doubt should mingle with my filial joy?
Deal with me as thou wilt, but spare this boy.'

High and inscrutable the old man stood,
Calm in his voice, and calm within his eye —
Not always signs with him of calmest mood.
He looked upon her, but gave no reply;
Then turned to Juan, in whose cheek the blood
Oft came and went, as there resolved to die
In arms, at least, he stood in act to spring
On the first foe whom Lambro's call might bring.

'Young man, your sword!' So Lambro once more said;
Juan replied, 'Not while this arm is free!'
The old man's cheek grew pale, but not with dread,
But drawing from his belt a pistol, he
Replied, 'Your blood be then on your own head.'
Then looked close at the flint, as if to see
'T was fresh — for he had lately used the lock —
And next proceeded quietly to cock.

It has a strange, quick jar upon the ear,
That cocking of a pistol, when you know
A moment more will bring the sight to bear
Upon your person, twelve yards off, or so;
A gentlemanly distance, not too near,
If you have got a former friend for foe;
But after being fired at once or twice,
The ear becomes more Irish, and less nice.

Lambro presented, and one instant more
Had stopped this canto, and Don Juan's breath,
When Haidée threw herself her boy before,
Stern as her sire: 'On me,' she cried. 'let death
Descend — the fault is mine; this fatal shore
He found — but sought not. I have pledged my faith;
I love him — I will die with him: I knew
Your nature's firmness — know your daughter's too.'

A minute past, and she had been all tears,
And tenderness, and infancy; but now
She stood as one who championed human fears —
Pale, statue-like, and stern, she wooed the blow;
And tall beyond her sex, and their compeers,
She drew up to her height, as if to show
A fairer mark; and with a fixed eye scanned
Her father's face — but never stopped his hand.

He gazed on her, and she on him; 't was strange
How like they looked! the expression was the same;
Serenely savage, with a little change
In the large dark eye's mutual-darted flame;
For she, too, was as one who could avenge,
If cause should be — a lioness, though tame:
Her father's blood, before her father's face
Boiled up, and proved her truly of his race.

I said they were alike, their features and
Their stature differing but in sex and years;
Even to the delicacy of their hand
There was resemblance, such as true blood wears;
And now to see them, thus divided, stand
In fixed ferocity, when joyous tears,
And sweet sensations, should have welcomed both,
Show what the passions are in their full growth.

The father paused a moment, then withdrew
His weapon, and replaced it; but stood still,
And looking on her, as to look her through,
'Not *I*,' he said, 'have sought this stranger's ill;
Not *I* have made this desolation; few
Would bear such outrage, and forbear to kill;

But I must do my duty — how thou hast
Done thine, the present vouches for the past.

'Let him disarm; or, by my father's head,
His own shall roll before you like a ball!'
He raised his whistle, as the word he said,
And blew, another answered to the call,
And, rushing in disorderly, though led,
And armed from boot to turban, one and all,
Some twenty of his train came, rank on rank;
He gave the word — 'Arrest or slay the Frank!'

Then, with a sudden movement, he withdrew
His daughter; while compressed within his clasp,
'Twixt her and Juan interposed the crew;
In vain she struggled in her father's grasp —
His arms were like a serpent's coil: then flew
Upon their prey, as darts an angry asp,
The file of pirates; save the foremost, who
Had fallen, with his right shoulder half cut through.

The second had his cheek laid open; but
The third, a wary, cool old sworder, took
The blows upon his cutlass, and then put
His own well in: so well, ere you could look,
His man was floored, and helpless at his foot,
With the blood running like a little brook,
From two smart sabre gashes, deep and red —
One on the arm, the other on the head.

And then they bound him where he fell, and bore
Juan from the apartment: with a sign,
Old Lambro bade them take him to the shore,
Where lay some ships which were to sail at nine.
They laid him in a boat, and plied the oar
Until they reached some galliots, placed in line;
On board of one of these, and under hatches,
They stowed him, with strict orders to the watches.

The world is full of strange vicissitudes,
And here was one exceedingly unpleasant:
A gentleman so rich in the world's goods,
Handsome and young, enjoying all the present,
Just at the very time when he least broods
On such a thing, is suddenly to sea sent,
Wounded and chained, so that he cannot move,
And all because a lady fell in love.

Here I must leave him, for I grow pathetic,
Moved by the Chinese nymph of tears, green tea!
Than whom Cassandra was not more prophetic;
For if my pure libations exceed three,
I feel my heart become so sympathetic,
That I must have recourse to black Bohea:
'T is pity wine should be so deleterious,
For tea and coffee leave us much more serious,

Unless when qualified with thee, Cognac!
Sweet Naïad of the Phlegethontic rill!
Ah, why the liver wilt thou thus attack,
And make, like other nymphs, thy lovers ill?
I would take refuge in weak punch, but *rack*
(In each sense of the word), whene'er I fill
My mild and midnight beakers to the brim,
Wakes me next morning with its synonym.

I leave Don Juan for the present, safe —
Not sound, poor fellow, but severely wounded;
Yet could his corporal pangs amount to half
Of those with which his Haidée's bosom bounded!
She was not one to weep, and rave, and chafe,
And then give way, subdued, because surrounded;
Her mother was a Moorish maid, from Fez,
Where all is Eden, or a wilderness.

There the large olive rains its amber store
In marble fonts; there grain, and flower, and fruit,
Gush from the earth, until the land runs o'er:
But there, too, many a poison tree has root,

And midnight listens to the lion's roar,
And long, long deserts scorch the camel's foot,
Or heaving, whelm the helpless caravan:
And as the soil is, so the heart of man.

Afric is all the sun's, and as her earth
Her human clay is kindled: full of power
For good or evil, burning from its birth.
The Moorish blood partakes the planet's hour,
And like the soil beneath, it will bring forth:
Beauty and love were Haidée's mother's dower;
But her large dark eye showed deep Passion's force,
Though sleeping like a lion near a source.

Her daughter, tempered with a milder ray,
Like summer's clouds all silvery smooth and fair,
Till slowly charged with thunder, they display
Terror to earth, and tempest to the air,
Had held till now her soft and milky way,
But, overwrought with passion and despair,
The fire burst forth from her Numidian veins,
Even as the Simoom sweeps the blasted plains.

The last sight which she saw was Juan's gore,
And he himself o'ermastered, and cut down;
His blood was running on the very floor,
Where late he trod, her beautiful, her own;
Thus much she viewed an instant, and no more —
Her struggles ceased with one convulsive groan;
On her sire's arm, which, until now, scarce held
Her, writhing, fell she, like a cedar felled.

A vein had burst, and her sweet lips' pure dyes
Were dabbled with the deep blood which ran o'er;
And her head drooped, as when the lily lies
O'ercharged with rain: her summoned handmaids bore
Their lady to her couch, with gushing eyes;
Of herbs and cordials they produced their store,
But she defied all means they could employ,
Like one life could not hold, nor death destroy.

Days lay she in that state, unchanged, though chill —
With nothing livid, still her lips were red:
She had no pulse, but death seemed absent still;
No hideous sign proclaimed her surely dead;
Corruption came not, in each mind to kill
All hope; to look upon her sweet face, bred
New thoughts of life, for it seemed full of soul —
She had so much, earth could not claim the whole.

The ruling passion, such as marble shows
When exquisitely chiseled, still lay there,
But fixed as marble's unchanged aspect throws
O'er the fair Venus, but forever fair;
O'er the Laocoon's all eternal throes,
And ever-dying Gladiator's air,
Their energy, like life, forms all their fame,
Yet looks not life, for they are still the same.

She woke at length, but not as sleepers wake,
Rather the dead, for life seemed something new,
A strange sensation which she must partake
Perforce, since whatsoever met her view
Struck not on memory, though a heavy ache
Lay at her heart, whose earliest beat, still true,
Brought back the sense of pain without the cause,
For, for a while, the furies made a pause.

She looked on many a face with vacant eye,
On many a token, without knowing what;
She saw them watch her, without asking why,
And recked not who around her pillow sat:
Not speechless, though she spoke not; not a sigh
Relieved her thoughts; dull silence and quick chat
Were tried in vain by those who served; she gave
No sign, save breath, of having left the grave.

Her handmaids tended, but she heeded not;
Her father watched, she turned her eyes away;
She recognized no being, and no spot,
However dear, or cherished in their day;

They changed from room to room, but all forgot,
Gentle, but without memory, she lay;
At length those eyes, which they would fain be weaning
Back to old thoughts, waxed full of fearful meaning.

And then a slave bethought her of a harp;
The harper came and tuned his instrument.
At the first notes, irregular and sharp,
On him her flashing eyes a moment bent,
Then to the wall she turned, as if to warp
Her thoughts from sorrow through her heart re-sent;
And he began a long low island song
Of ancient days, ere tyranny grew strong.

Anon her thin wan fingers beat the wall,
In time to his old tune: he changed the theme,
And sung of love; the fierce name struck through all
Her recollection; on her flashed the dream
Of what she was, and is, if ye could call
To be so being: in a gushing stream
The tears rushed forth from her o'erclouded brain,
Like mountain mists, at length dissolved in rain.

Short solace, vain relief!—thought came too quick,
And whirled her brain to madness; she arose,
As one who ne'er had dwelt among the sick,
And flew at all she met, as on her foes;
But no one ever heard her speak or shriek,
Although her paroxysm drew towards its close:—
Hers was a frenzy which disdained to rave,
Even when they smote her, in the hope to save.

Yet she betrayed at times a gleam of sense;
Nothing could make her meet her father's face,
Though on all other things with looks intense
She gazed, but none she ever could retrace.
Food she refused, and raiment; no pretence
Availed for either; neither change of place,
Nor time, nor skill, nor remedy, could give her
Senses to sleep—the power seemed gone forever.

Twelve days and nights she withered thus; at last,
Without a groan, or sigh, or glance, to show
A parting pang, the spirit from her past:
And they who watched her nearest, could not know
The very instant, till the change that cast
Her sweet face into shadow, dull and slow,
Glazed o'er her eyes—the beautiful, the black—
Oh! to possess such luster—and then lack!

Thus lived—thus died she; never more on her
Shall sorrow light, or shame. She was not made
Through years or moons the inner weight to bear,
Which colder hearts endure till they are laid
By age in earth; her days and pleasures were
Brief but delightful—such as had not stayed
Long with her destiny; but she sleeps well
By the sea-shore, whereon she loved to dwell.

The isle is now all desolate and bare,
Its dwellings down, its tenants passed away;
None but her own and father's grave is there,
And nothing outward tells of human clay:
Ye could not know where lies a thing so fair,
No stone is there to show, no tongue to say
What was: no dirge, except the hollow sea's,
Mourns o'er the beauty of the Cyclades.

* * *

(1821)

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792–1822)

Shelley was the son of a country squire of large means whose utter inability to comprehend the nature of his son's convictions was an important factor in the latter's history. At Eton 'mad Shelley' became unpopular with the older boys for heading an insurrection against the school system of 'fagging,' and he had not been long at University College, Oxford, when he was expelled for circulating a revolutionary tract entitled *The Necessity of Atheism.* He was only nineteen when out of fancied chivalry he married Harriet Westbrooke, a school girl of sixteen, much below him in social station. Angered by the first indiscretion, his father was permanently estranged by the second. These two children set off for Dublin, Shelley writing to a friend, 'We go to forward as much as we can the Catholic Emancipation.' Before setting out for the scene of destiny he had printed an *Address to the Irish People,* which he now published by dropping it from windows upon such passers-by as 'looked likely.' Shelley's ingenuous faith that men needed only to be shown the truth in order to follow it was doomed to cruel disillusion. For two or three years he wandered about the British Isles pushing his propaganda of freedom, and prosecuting irregular studies in philosophy and literature. His friend Hogg declared that a splendid library might have been formed out of the books which Shelley left scattered about the three kingdoms. In 1814, he separated from Harriet and, soon after, he fell passionately in love with Mary Godwin, daughter of the author of *Political Justice.* The feeling was returned and consistently with the tenets of all concerned, except Harriet and Shelley's father, Mary became his mate. Two years later, the wife whom he had abandoned ended her life by drowning. How far Shelley should be held culpable for this unhappy event is a moot point with his biographers. In 1818, he permanently left England for Italy, partially on account of his health and partially out of a fear lest the Lord Chancellor, who had already removed from his custody the children of his first marriage, might pass a similar judgment in regard to those of the second.

In Italy, for more reasons than one can pause to enumerate, Shelley's genius flowered; but only four years of it remained. Setting out in a small sailing boat he was overtaken by a squall in the bay of Lerici. A few days later his body was found imbedded in the sand of the shore. In one pocket of his jacket was a volume of Sophocles and in the other a volume of Keats, 'doubled back as if the reader, in the act of reading, had hastily thrust it away.' A narration of the bare acts of Shelley's life leaves an impression of waywardness which is not altogether misleading. Those who were competent to judge agreed that his impulses were noble and high, that a purer spirit never breathed; but he suffered and made others suffer because he would not bind himself to the code by which society lives. To the common run of his contemporaries he was a fanatical monster; to many since it has seemed that his sufferings and errors were the fault of an irrationally organized world and that he himself belonged to a 'crowning race' of which he was 'a noble type, appearing ere the time was ripe.'

All of Shelley's poetry of importance was written after he met Mary Godwin. *Queen Mab* (1813) was a frantic poetical drama interesting only for its revolutionary doctrines. His genius first declared itself in *Alastor* (1815), and passages of great promise are scattered through his enormous revolutionary document, *The Revolt of Islam* (1817). But in Italy he matured with astonishing rapidity. To the year 1819 belonged *Prometheus Unbound,* his totally different *Cenci* which some critics regard as the most distinguished poetical tragedy since the Elizabethans, and numerous fine lyrics, including the *Ode to the West Wind.* The year 1820 was notable chiefly for its lyrics, *To a Skylark* among them. In 1821, besides *Epipsychidion, Adonais,* and *Hellas,* came some of the most poignant of the short lyrics. *The Triumph of Life* was uncompleted when Shelley set out to sea on Monday, July 8, 1822.

No one can estimate Shelley for us but ourselves. This is true of all poetry, but preëminently so of Shelley's because it is so preëminently poetical. When it is best it has little intellectual content. We do not, narrowly speaking, learn anything from Shelley; we surrender to an element.

HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY

The awful shadow of some unseen Power
Floats though unseen amongst us,—visiting
This various world with as inconstant wing
As summer winds that creep from flower to flower;—
Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower,
It visits with inconstant glance
Each human heart and countenance;
Like hues and harmonies of evening,—
Like clouds in starlight widely spread,—
Like memory of music fled,—
Like aught that for its grace may be
Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

Spirit of Beauty, that dost consecrate
With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon
Of human thought or form,—where art thou gone?
Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,
This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?
Ask why the sunlight not forever
Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain river,
Why aught should fail and fade that once is shown,
Why fear and dream and death and birth
Cast on the daylight of this earth
Such gloom,—why man has such a scope
For love and hate, despondency and hope?

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever
To sage or poet these responses given—
Therefore the names of Dæmon, Ghost, and Heaven,
Remain the records of their vain endeavor,
Frail spells—whose uttered charm might not avail to sever,
From all we hear and all we see,
Doubt, chance, and mutability.
Thy light alone—like mist o'er mountains driven,
Or music by the night wind sent,
Through strings of some still instrument,
Or moonlight on a midnight stream,
Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds depart
And come, for some uncertain moments lent.
Man were immortal, and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,
Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart.
Thou messenger of sympathies,
That wax and wane in lovers' eyes—
Thou—that to human thought art nourishment,
Like darkness to a dying flame!
Depart not as thy shadow came,
Depart not—lest the grave should be,
Like life and fear, a dark reality.

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,
And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.
I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed;
I was not heard—I saw them not—
When musing deeply on the lot
Of life, at the sweet time when winds are wooing
All vital things that wake to bring
News of birds and blossoming,—
Sudden, thy shadow fell on me;
I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy!

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine—have I not kept the vow?
With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now
I call the phantoms of a thousand hours
Each from his voiceless grave: they have in visioned bowers
Of studious zeal or love's delight
Outwatched with me the envious night—
They know that never joy illumed my brow
Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst free
This world from its dark slavery,
That thou—O awful Loveliness,
Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

The day becomes more solemn and serene
When noon is past—there is a harmony
In autumn, and a luster in its sky,

Which through the summer is not heard or seen,
As if it could not be, as if it had not been!
Thus let thy power, which like the truth
Of nature on my passive youth
Descended, to my onward life supply
Its calm — to one who worships thee,
And every form containing thee,
Whom, Spirit fair, thy spells did bind
To fear himself, and love all human kind.
(1819)

OZYMANDIAS

I met a traveler from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, (stamped on these lifeless things,)
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings;
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.
(1819)

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN DEJECTION, NEAR NAPLES

The sun is warm, the sky is clear,
The waves are dancing fast and bright,
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
The purple noon's transparent might,
The breath of the moist earth is light,
Around its unexpanded buds:
Like many a voice of one delight,
The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
The City's voice itself is soft like Solitude's.

I see the Deep's untrampled floor
With green and purple seaweeds strown:
I see the waves upon the shore,
Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown:
I sit upon the sands alone,
The lightning of the noontide ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion,
How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around,
Nor that content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found,
And walked with inward glory crowned —
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
Others I see whom these surround —
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure; —
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

Yet now despair itself is mild,
Even as the winds and waters are;
I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne and yet must bear,
Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

Some might lament that I were cold,
As I when this sweet day is gone,
Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
Insults with this untimely moan;
They might lament — for I am one
Whom men love not, — and yet regret,
Unlike this day, which, when the sun
Shall on its stainless glory set,
Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet.
(1842)

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND,

ACT IV

SCENE, A PART OF THE FOREST NEAR THE CAVE OF PROMETHEUS. PANTHEA *and* IONE *are sleeping. They awaken gradually during the first song.*

Voice of Unseen Spirits

The pale stars are gone!
For the sun, their swift shepherd,
To their folds them compelling,
In the depths of the dawn,
Hastes, in meteor-eclipsing array, and they flee
Beyond his blue dwelling,
As fawns flee the leopard.
But where are ye?

A train of dark Forms and Shadows passes by confusedly, singing.

Here, oh, here:
We bear the bier
Of the Father of many a canceled year!
Specters we
Of the dead Hours be,
We bear Time to his tomb in eternity.

Strew, oh, strew
Hair, not yew!
Wet the dusty pall with tears, not dew!
Be the faded flowers
Of Death's bare bowers
Spread on the corpse of the King of Hours!

Haste, oh, haste!
As shades are chased,
Trembling, by day, from heaven's blue waste.
We melt away,
Like dissolving spray,
From the children of a diviner day,
With the lullaby
Of winds that die
On the bosom of their own harmony!

Ione

What dark forms were they?

Panthea

The past Hours weak and gray,
With the spoil which their toil
Raked together
From the conquest but One could foil.

Ione

Have they past?

Panthea

They have past;
They outspeeded the blast,
While 't is said, they are fled:

Ione

Whither, oh, whither?

Panthea

To the dark, to the past, to the dead.

Voice of Unseen Spirits

Bright clouds float in heaven,
Dew-stars gleam on earth,
Waves assemble on ocean,
They are gathered and driven
By the storm of delight, by the panic of glee!
They shake with emotion,
They dance in their mirth.
But where are ye?

The pine boughs are singing,
Old songs with new gladness,
The billows and fountains
Fresh music are flinging,
Like the notes of a spirit from land and from sea;
The storms mock the mountains
With the thunder of gladness.
But where are ye?

Ione. What charioteers are these?
Panthea. Where are their chariots?

Semichorus of Hours

The voice of the Spirits of Air and of Earth
Have drawn back the figured curtain of sleep
Which covered our being and darkened our birth
In the deep.

A Voice

In the deep?

Semichorus II

Oh! below the deep.

Semichorus I

An hundred ages we had been kept
Cradled in visions of hate and care,
And each one who waked as his brother slept,
Found the truth —

Semichorus II

Worse than his visions were!

Semichorus I

We have heard the lute of Hope in sleep;
We have known the voice of Love in dreams,
We have felt the wand of Power, and leap —

Semichorus I

As the billows leap in the morning beams!

Chorus

Weave the dance on the floor of the breeze,

Pierce with song heaven's silent light,
Enchant the day that too swiftly flees,
To check its flight ere the cave of night.

Once the hungry Hours were hounds
Which chased the day like a bleeding deer,
And it limped and stumbled with many wounds
Through the nightly dells of the desert year.

But now, oh, weave the mystic measure
Of music and dance, and shapes of light,
Let the Hours, and the spirits of might and pleasure,
Like the clouds and sunbeams, unite.

A Voice

Unite!

Panthea. See, where the spirits of the human mind
Wrapt in sweet sounds, as in bright veils, approach.

Chorus of Spirits

We join the throng
Of the dance and the song,
By the whirlwind of gladness borne along:
As the flying-fish leap
From the Indian deep,
And mix with the sea-birds, half asleep.

Chorus of Hours

Whence come ye, so wild and so fleet,
For sandals of lightning are on your feet,
And your wings are soft and swift as thought,
And your eyes are as love which is veilèd not?

Chorus of Spirits

We come from the mind
Of human kind
Which was late so dusk, and obscene, and blind.
Now 't is an ocean
Of clear emotion,
A heaven of serene and mighty motion;

From that deep abyss
Of wonder and bliss,
Whose caverns are crystal palaces;
From these skiey towers
Where Thought's crowned powers
Sit watching your dance, ye happy Hours!

From the dim recesses
Of woven caresses,
Where lovers catch ye by your loose tresses;
From the azure isles;
Where sweet Wisdom smiles,
Delaying your ships with her siren wiles.

From the temples high
Of Man's ear and eye,
Roofed over Sculpture and Poesy;
From the murmurings
Of the unsealed springs
Where Science bedews his Dædal wings.

Years after years,
Through blood and tears,
And a thick hell of hatreds, and hopes, and fears;
We waded and flew
And the islets were few
Where the bud-blighted flowers of happiness grew.

Our feet now, every palm,
Are sandaled with calm,
And the dew of our wings is a rain of balm;
And, beyond our eyes,
The human love lies
Which makes all it gazes on Paradise.

Chorus of Spirits and Hours

Then weave the web of the mystic measure;
From the depths of the sky and the ends of the earth,
Come, swift Spirits of might and of pleasure,
Fill the dance and the music of mirth,
As the waves of a thousand streams rush by
To an ocean of splendor and harmony!

Chorus of Spirits

Our spoil is won,
Our task is done,
We are free to dive, or soar, or run;
Beyond and around,
Or within the bound
Which clips the world with darkness round.

We 'll pass the eyes
Of the starry skies
Into the hoar deep to colonize:
Death, Chaos, and Night,
From the sound of our flight,
Shall flee, like mist from a tempest's might.

And Earth, Air, and Light,
And the Spirit of Might,
Which drives round the stars in their fiery flight;
And Love, Thought, and Breath,
The powers that quell Death,
Wherever we soar shall assemble beneath.

And our singing shall build
In the void's loose field
A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to wield;
We will take our plan
From the new world of man,
And our work shall be called the Promethean.

Chorus of Hours

Break the dance, and scatter the song;
Let some depart, and some remain.

Semichorus I

We, beyond heaven, are driven along!

Semichorus II

Us the enchantments of earth retain;

Semichorus I

Ceaseless, and rapid, and fierce and free,
With the Spirits which build a new earth and sea,
And a heaven where yet heaven could never be.

Semichorus II

Solemn, and slow, and serene and bright,
Leading the Day and outspeeding the Night,
With the powers of a world of perfect light.

Semichorus I

We whirl, singing loud, round the gathering sphere,
Till the trees, and the beasts, and the clouds appear
From its chaos made calm by love, not fear.

Semichorus II

We encircle the ocean and mountains of earth,
And the happy forms of its death and birth
Change to the music of our sweet mirth.

Chorus of Hours and Spirits

Break the dance, and scatter the song,
Let some depart, and some remain,
Wherever we fly we lead along,
In leashes, like starbeams, soft yet strong.
The clouds that are heavy with love's sweet rain.

Panthea. Ha! they are gone!
Ione. Yet feel you no delight
From the past sweetness?
Panthea. As the bare green hill
When some soft cloud vanishes into rain,
Laughs with a thousand drops of sunny water
To the unpavilioned sky!
Ione. Even whilst we speak
New notes arise. What is that awful sound?
Panthea. 'T is the deep music of the rolling world
Kindling within the strings of the waved air,
Æolian modulations.
Ione. Listen too,
How every pause is filled with under notes,
Clear, silver, icy, keen, awakening tones,
Which pierce the sense, and live within the soul,
As the sharp stars pierce winter's crystal air
And gaze upon themselves within the sea.
Panthea. But see where through two openings in the forest
Which hanging branches overcanopy,
And where two runnels of a rivulet,
Between the close moss violet-inwoven,
Have made their path of melody, like sisters
Who part with sighs that they may meet in smiles,
Turning their dear disunion to an isle
Of lovely grief, a wood of sweet sad thoughts;
Two visions of strange radiance float upon
The ocean-like enchantment of strong sound,
Which flows intenser, keener, deeper yet
Under the ground and through the windless air,
Ione. I see a chariot like that thinnest boat,
In which the mother of the months is borne
By ebbing night into her western cave,
When she upsprings from interlunar dreams,
O'er which is curved an orblike canopy
Of gentle darkness, and the hills and woods
Distinctly seen through that dusk airy veil,
Regard like shapes in an enchanter's glass;
Its wheels are solid clouds, azure and gold,

Such as the genii of the thunderstorm
Pile on the floor of the illumined sea
When the sun rushes under it; they roll
And move and grow as with an inward wind;
Within it sits a wingèd infant, white
Its countenance, like the whiteness of bright snow,
Its plumes are as feathers of sunny frost,
Its limbs gleam white, through the wind flowing folds
Of its white robe, woof of ethereal pearl.
Its hair is white, the brightness of white light
Scattered in strings; yet its two eyes are heavens
Of liquid darkness, which the Deity
Within seems pouring, as a storm is poured
From jaggèd clouds, out of their arrowy lashes,
Tempering the cold and radiant air around,
With fire that is not brightness: in its hand
It sways a quivering moonbeam, from whose point
A guiding power directs the chariot's prow
Over its wheelèd clouds, which as they roll
Over the grass, and flowers, and waves, wake sounds,
Sweet as a singing rain of silver dew.

Panthea. And from the other opening in the wood
Rushes, with loud and whirlwind harmony,
A sphere, which is as many thousand spheres,
Solid as crystal, yet through all its mass
Flow, as through empty space, music and light:
Ten thousand orbs involving and involved,
Purple and azure, white, and green, and golden,
Sphere within sphere; and every space between
Peopled with unimaginable shapes,
Such as ghosts dream dwell in the lampless deep,
Yet each inter-transpicuous, and they whirl
Over each other with a thousand motions,
Upon a thousand sightless axles spinning,
And with the force of self-destroying swiftness,
Intensely, slowly, solemnly roll on,
Kindling with mingled sounds, and many tones,
Intelligible words and music wild.
With mighty whirl the multitudinous orb
Grinds the bright brook into an azure mist
Of elemental subtlety; like light:
And the wild odor of the forest flowers,
The music of the living grass and air,
The emerald light of leaf-entangled beams
Round its intense yet self-conflicting speed,
Seem kneaded into one aërial mass
Which drowns the sense. Within the orb itself,
Pillowed upon its alabaster arms,
Like to a child o'erwearied with sweet toil,
On its own folded wings, and wavy hair,
The Spirit of the Earth is laid asleep,
And you can see its little lips are moving,
Amid the changing light of their own smiles,
Like one who talks of what he loves in dream.

Ione. 'T is only mocking the orb's harmony.

Panthea. And from a star upon its forehead, shoot,
Like swords of azure fire, or golden spears
With tyrant-quelling myrtle overtwined,
Embleming heaven and earth united now,
Vast beams like spokes of some invisible wheel
Which whirl as the orb whirls, swifter than thought,
Filling the abyss with sun-like lightenings,
And perpendicular now, and now transverse,
Pierce the dark soil, and as they pierce and pass,
Make bare the secrets of the earth's deep heart;
Infinite mine of adamant and gold,
Valueless stones, and unimagined gems,
And caverns on crystalline columns poised
With vegetable silver overspread;
Wells of unfathomed fire, and water springs
Whence the great sea, even as a child is fed,
Whose vapors clothe earth's monarch mountain-tops
With kingly ermine snow. The beams flash on
And make appear the melancholy ruins
Of canceled cycles; anchors, beaks of ships;
Planks turned to marble; quivers, helms, and spears,
And gorgon-headed targes, and the wheels
Of scythèd chariots and the emblazonry
Of trophies, standards, and armorial beasts,
Round which death laughed, sepulchred emblems
Of dead destruction, ruin within ruin!

The wrecks beside of many a city vast,
Whose population which the earth grew over
Was mortal, but not human; see, they lie,
Their monstrous works, and uncouth skeletons,
Their statues, homes and fanes: prodigious shapes
Huddled in gray annihilation, split,
Jammed in the hard, black deep; and over these,
The anatomies of unknown wingèd things,
And fishes which were isles of living scale,
And serpents, bony chains, twisted around
The iron crags, or within heaps of dust
To which the tortuous strength of their last pangs
Had crushed the iron crags; and over these
The jagged alligator, and the might
Of earth-convulsing behemoth, which once
Were monarch beasts, and on the slimy shores,
And weed-overgrown continents of earth,
Increased and multiplied like summer worms
On an abandoned corpse, till the blue globe
Wrapt deluge round it like a cloak, and they
Yelled, gasped, and were abolished; or some God
Whose throne was in a comet, passed, and cried,
Be not! And like my words they were no more.

The Earth

The joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness!
The boundless, overflowing, bursting gladness,
The vaporous exultation not to be confined!
Ha! ha! the animation of delight
Which wraps me, like an atmosphere of light,
And bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind.

The Moon

Brother mine, calm wanderer,
Happy globe of land and air,
Some Spirit is darted like a beam from thee.
Which penetrates my frozen frame,
And passes with the warmth of flame,
With love, and odor, and deep melody
Through me, through me!

The Earth

Ha! ha! the caverns of my hollow mountains,
My cloven fire-crags, sound-exulting fountains,
Laugh with a vast and inextinguishable laughter.
The oceans, and the deserts, and the abysses,
And the deep air's unmeasured wildernesses,
Answer from all their clouds and billows, echoing after.

They cry aloud as I do. Sceptered curse,
Who all our green and azure universe
Threatenedst to muffle round with black destruction, sending
A solid cloud to rain hot thunderstones,
And splinter and knead down my children's bones,
All I bring forth, to one void mass, battering and blending,

Until each crag-like tower, and storied column,
Palace, and obelisk, and temple solemn,
My imperial mountains crowned with cloud, and snow, and fire;
My sea-like forests, every blade and blossom
Which finds a grave or cradle in my bosom,
Were stamped by thy strong hate into a lifeless mire.

How art thou sunk, withdrawn, covered, drunk up
By thirsty nothing, as the brackish cup
Drained by a desert-troop, a little drop for all;
And from beneath, around, within, above,
Filling thy void annihilation, love
Burst in like light on caves cloven by the thunder-ball

The Moon

The snow upon my lifeless mountains
Is loosened into living fountains,
My solid oceans flow, and sing, and shine:
A spirit from my heart bursts forth,
It clothes with unexpected birth
My cold bare bosom: Oh! it must be thine
On mine, on mine!

Gazing on thee I feel, I know
Green stalks burst forth, and bright flowers grow,

And living shapes upon my bosom move:
Music is in the sea and air,
Wingèd clouds soar here and there,
Dark with the rain new buds are dreaming of:
'T is love, all love!

The Earth

It interpenetrates my granite mass,
Through tangled roots and trodden clay doth pass,
Into the utmost leaves and delicatest flowers;
Upon the winds, among the clouds 't is spread,
It wakes a life in the forgotten dead,
They breathe a spirit up from their obscurest bowers,

And like a storm bursting its cloudy prison
With thunder, and with whirlwind, has arisen
Out of the lampless caves of unimagined being:
With earthquake shock and swiftness making shiver
Thought's stagnant chaos, unremoved for ever,
Till hate, and fear, and pain, light-vanquished shadows, fleeing,

Leave Man, who was a many-sided mirror,
Which could distort to many a shape of error,
This true fair world of things, a sea reflecting love;
Which over all his kind as the sun's heaven
Gliding o'er ocean, smooth, serene and even
Darting from starry depths radiance and life, doth move,

Leave Man, even as a leprous child is left,
Who follows a sick beast to some warm cleft
Of rocks, through which the might of healing springs is poured;
Then when it wanders home with rosy smile,
Unconscious, and its mother fears awhile
It is a spirit, then, weeps on her child restored —

Man, oh, not men! a chain of linkèd thought,
Of love and might to be divided not,
Compelling the elements with adamantine stress;
As the sun rules, even with a tyrant's gaze,
The unquiet republic of the maze
Of planets, struggling fierce towards heaven's free wilderness —

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,
Whose nature is its own divine control,
Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea;
Familiar acts are beautiful through love;
Labor, and pain, and grief, in life's green grove
Sport like tame beasts, none knew how gentle they could be!

His will, with all mean passions, bad delights,
And selfish cares, its trembling satellites,
A spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey,
Is as a tempest-wingèd ship whose helm
Love rules, through waves which dare not overwhelm,
Forcing life's wildest shores to own its sovereign sway.

All things confess his strength. Through the cold mass
Of marble and of color his dreams pass;
Bright threads whence mothers weave the robes their children wear;
Language is a perpetual orphic song,
Which rules with Dædal harmony a throng
Of thoughts and forms, which else senseless and shapeless were.

The lightning is his slave; heaven's utmost deep
Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep
They pass before his eyes, are numbered, and roll on!
The tempest is his steed, he strides the air;
And the abyss shouts from her depth laid bare,
Heaven, hast thou secrets? Man unveils me; I have none.

The Moon

The shadow of white death has past
From my path in heaven at last,
A clinging shroud of solid frost and sleep;
And through my newly-woven bowers,

Wander happy paramours,
Less mighty, but as mild as those who keep
Thy vales more deep.

The Earth

As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold
A half-unfrozen dew-globe, green and gold,
And crystalline, till it becomes a winged mist,
And wanders up the vault of the blue day,
Outlives the noon, and on the sun's last ray
Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst.

The Moon

Thou art folded, thou art lying
In the light which is undying,
Of thine own joy, and heaven's smile divine;
All suns and constellations shower
On thee a light, a life, a power
Which doth array thy sphere; thou pourest thine
On mine, on mine!

The Earth

I spin beneath my pyramid of night,
Which points into the heavens dreaming delight,
Murmuring victorious joy in my enchanted sleep;
As a youth lulled in love-dreams faintly sighing,
Under the shadows of his beauty lying,
Which round his rest a watch of light and warmth doth keep.

The Moon

As in the soft and sweet eclipse,
When soul meets soul on lovers' lips,
High hearts are calm, and brightest eyes are dull;
So when thy shadow falls on me,
Then am I mute and still, by thee
Covered: of thy love, Orb most beautiful,
Full, oh, too full!

Thou art speeding round the sun,
Brightest world of many a one;
Green and azure sphere which shinest
With a light which is divinest
Among all the lamps of Heaven
To whom light and life is given;
I, thy crystal paramour,
Borne beside thee by a power
Like the polar Paradise,
Magnet-like of lovers' eyes;
I, a most enamored maiden
Whose weak brain is overladen
With the pleasure of her love,
Maniac-like around thee move
Gazing, an insatiate bride,
On thy form from every side
Like a Mænad, round the cup
Which Agave lifted up
In the weird Cadmeian forest.
Brother, wheresoe'er thou soarest
I must hurry, whirl and follow
Through the heavens wide and hollow,
Sheltered by the warm embrace
Of thy soul from hungry space,
Drinking from thy sense and sight
Beauty, majesty, and might,
As a lover or chameleon
Grows like what it looks upon,
As a violet's gentle eye
Gazes on the azure sky
Until its hue grows like what it beholds,
As a gray and watery mist
Glows like solid amethyst
Athwart the western mountain it enfolds,
When the sunset sleeps
Upon its snow.

The Earth

And the weak day weeps
That it should be so.
Oh, gentle Moon, the voice of thy delight
Falls on me like thy clear and tender light
Soothing the seaman, borne the summer night,
Through isles for ever calm;
Oh, gentle Moon, thy crystal accents pierce
The caverns of my pride's deep universe,
Charming the tiger joy, whose tramplings fierce
Made wounds which need thy balm.

Panthea. I rise as from a bath of sparkling water,
A bath of azure light, among dark rocks,
Out of the stream of sound.

Ione. Ah me! sweet sister,
The stream of sound has ebbed away from us,
And you pretend to rise out of its wave,
Because your words fall like the clear, soft dew
Shaken from a bathing wood-nymph's limbs and hair.

Panthea. Peace! peace! A mighty Power, which is as darkness,
Is rising out of Earth, and from the sky

Is showered like night, and from within the air
Bursts, like eclipse which had been gathered up
Into the pores of sunlight: the bright visions,
Wherein the singing spirits rode and shone,
Gleam like pale meteors through a watery night.
Ione. There is a sense of words upon mine ear.
Panthea. An universal sound like words: Oh, list!

Demogorgon

Thou, Earth, calm empire of a happy soul,
Sphere of divinest shapes and harmonies,
Beautiful orb! gathering as thou dost roll
The love which paves thy path along the skies:

The Earth

I hear: I am as a drop of dew that dies.

Demogorgon

Thou, Moon, which gazest on the nightly Earth
With wonder, as it gazes upon thee;
Whilst each to men, and beasts, and the swift birth
Of birds, is beauty, love, calm, harmony:

The Moon

I hear: I am a leaf shaken by thee!

Demogorgon

Ye kings of suns and stars, Demons and Gods,
Ethereal Dominations, who possess
Elysian, windless, fortunate abodes
Beyond Heaven's constellated wilderness:

A Voice from above

Our great Republic hears, we are blest, and bless.

Demogorgon

Ye happy dead, whom beams of brightest verse
Are clouds to hide, not colors to portray,
Whether your nature is that universe
Which once ye saw and suffered —

A Voice from beneath

Or as they
Whom we have left, we change and pass away.

Demogorgon

Ye elemental Genii, who have homes
From man's high mind even to the central stone
Of sullen lead; from Heaven's star-fretted domes
To the dull weed some sea-worm battens on:

A confused Voice

We hear: thy words waken Oblivion.

Demogorgon

Spirits, whose homes are flesh: ye beasts and birds,
Ye worms, and fish; ye living leaves and buds;
Lightning and wind; and ye untamable herds,
Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes: —

A Voice

Thy voice to us is wind among still woods.

Demogorgon

Man, who wert once a despot and a slave;
A dupe and a deceiver; a decay;
A traveler from the cradle to the grave
Through the dim night of this immortal day:

All

Speak; thy strong words may never pass away.

Demogorgon

This is the day, which down the void abysm
At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's despotism,
And Conquest is dragged captive through the deep:
Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
Of dead endurance, from the slippery, steep,
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs
And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,

These are the seals of that most firm assurance
Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength;
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,
Mother of many acts and hours, should free
The serpent that would clasp her with his length;
These are the spells by which to reassume
An empire o'er the disentangled doom.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

(1820)

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

I

O, wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O, thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odors plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, O, hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulcher,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapors, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: O, hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: O, hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;

A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share
The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O, uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O, wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

(1820)

THE INDIAN SERENADE

I arise from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright:
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Hath led me — who knows how?
To thy chamber window. Sweet!
The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream —
The Champak odors fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart; —
As I must on thine,
O! belovèd as thou art!

O lift me from the grass!
I die! I faint! I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats loud and fast; —
Oh! press it to thine own again,
Where it will break at last.

(1822)

THE CLOUD

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noon-day dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 't is my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,—
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead,
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardors of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-colored bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colors wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.

For after the rain when, with never a stain,
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

(1820)

TO A SKYLARK

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are brightning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven
In the broad day-light
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not

Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aërial hue
Among the flowers and grass which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-winged thieves.

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine;
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine:

Chorus Hymenæal,
Or triumphal chaunt,
Matched with thine, would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be—
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest—but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound—
Better than all treasures
That in books are found—
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then—as I am listening now.

(1820)

A LAMENT

O world! O life! O time!
On whose last steps I climb
Trembling at that where I had stood before;
When will return the glory of your prime?
No more—Oh, never more!

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight;
Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,

Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
No more — Oh, never more!
(1824)

TO ——

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory —
Odors, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken,

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the belovèd's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.
(1824)

ADONAIS

I weep for Adonais — he is dead!
O, weep for Adonais! though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!
And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years
To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,
And teach them thine own sorrow! Say: 'With me
Died Adonais; till the Future dares
Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity!'

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay,
When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies
In darkness? where was lorn Urania
When Adonais died? With veilèd eyes,
'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise
She sate, while one, with soft enamored breath,
Rekindled all the fading melodies,
With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,
He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of death.

O, weep for Adonais — he is dead!
Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep!
Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed
Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep
Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;
For he is gone, where all things wise and fair
Descend; — oh, dream not that the amorous Deep
Will yet restore him to the vital air;
Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

Most musical of mourners, weep again!
Lament anew, Urania! — He died, —
Who was the Sire of an immortal strain,
Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride,
The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,
Trampled and mocked with many a loathèd rite
Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,
Into the gulph of death; but his clear Sprite
Yet reigns o'er earth; the third among the sons of light.

Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Not all to that bright station dared to climb;
And happier they their happiness who knew,
Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time
In which suns perished; others more sublime,
Struck by the envious wrath of man or God,
Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime;
And some yet live, treading the thorny road,
Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene abode.

But now, thy youngest, dearest one has perished,
The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,
And fed with true love tears, instead of dew;
Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,
The bloom, whose petals, nipped before they blew,
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;
The broken lily lies — the storm is overpast.

To that high Capital, where kingly Death
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,
A grave among the eternal.— Come away!
Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still
He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;
Awake him not! surely he takes his fill
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

He will awake no more, oh, never more!—
Within the twilight chamber spreads apace,
The shadow of white Death, and at the door
Invisible Corruption waits to trace
His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;
The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface
So fair a prey, till darkness, and the law
Of change, shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

O, weep for Adonais!— The quick Dreams,
The passion-wingèd Ministers of thought,
Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams
Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught
The love which was its music, wander not,—
Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,
But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn their lot
Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain,
They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.

And one with trembling hands clasps his cold head,
And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries:
'Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead;
See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,
Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies
A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain.'
Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise!
She knew not 't was her own; as with no stain
She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain.

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
Washed his light limbs as if embalming them;
Another clipped her profuse locks, and threw
The wreath upon him, like an anadem,
Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem;
Another in her wilful grief would break
Her bow and wingèd reeds, as if to stem
A greater loss with one which was more weak;
And dull the barbèd fire against his frozen cheek.

Another Splendor on his mouth alit,
That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath
Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,
And pass into the panting heart beneath
With lightning and with music: the damp death
Quenched its caress upon his icy lips;
And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
Of moonlight vapor, which the cold night clips,
It flushed through his pale limbs, and passed to its eclipse.

And others came . . . Desires and Adorations,
Wingèd Persuasions and veiled Destinies,
Splendors, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarnations
Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies;
And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam
Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,
Came in slow pomp;— the moving pomp might seem
Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

All he had loved, and molded into thought,
From shape, and hue, and odor, and sweet sound,
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,

Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,
Dimmed the aërial eyes that kindle day;
Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,
Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
And the wild winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,
And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,
And will no more reply to winds or fountains,
Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray,
Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day;
Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear
Than those for whose disdain she pined away
Into a shadow of all sounds; — a drear
Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear.

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown,
For whom should she have waked the sullen year?
To Phœbus was not Hyacinth so dear
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
Thou, Adonais: wan they stand and sere
Amid the faint companions of their youth,
With dew all turned to tears; odor, to sighing ruth.

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale,
Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain;
Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale
Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain
Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,
Soaring and screaming round her empty nest,
As Albion wails for thee: the curse of Cain
Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,
And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest!

Ah, woe is me! Winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving year;
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone;
The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear;
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Seasons' bier;
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,
And build their mossy homes in field and brere;
And the green lizard, and the golden snake,
Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

Through wood and stream and field and hill and Ocean
A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst,
As it has ever done, with change and motion
From the great morning of the world when first
God dawned on Chaos; in its stream immersed
The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light;
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst;
Diffuse themselves; and spend in love's delight
The beauty and the joy of their renewèd might.

The leprous corpse touched by this spirit tender
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;
Like incarnations of the stars, when splendor
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death
And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath;
Naught we know, dies. Shall that alone which knows
Be as a sword consumed before the sheath
By sightless lightning? — the intense atom glows
A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose.

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,
But for our grief, as if it had not been
And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!

Whence are we, and why are we? of what scene
The actors or spectators? Great and mean
Meet massed in death, who lends what life must borrow.
As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,
Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,
Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to sorrow.

He will awake no more, oh, never more!
'Wake thou,' cried Misery, 'childless Mother, rise
Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's core,
A wound more fierce than his with tears and sighs.'
And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes,
And all the Echoes whom their sister's song
Had held in holy silence, cried: 'Arise!'
Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,
From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendor sprung.

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs
Out of the East, and follows wild and drear
The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
Had left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear
So struck, so roused, so rapt Urania;
So saddened round her like an atmosphere
Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way
Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
Through camps and cities rough with stone and steel,
And human hearts, which to her aëry tread
Yielding not, wounded the invisible
Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell:
And barbèd tongues, and thoughts more sharp than they,
Rent the soft Form they never could repel,
Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

In the death chamber for a moment Death,
Shamed by the presence of that living Might,
Blushed to annihilation, and the breath
Revisited those lips, and life's pale light
Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear delight.
'Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,
As silent lightning leaves the starless night!
Leave me not!' cried Urania: her distress
Roused Death: Death rose and smiled, and met her vain caress.

'Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again;
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;
And in my heartless breast and burning brain
That word, that kiss shall all thoughts else survive,
With food of saddest memory kept alive,
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
Of thee, my Adonais! I would give
All that I am to be as thou now art!
But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart!

'Oh gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men
Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?
Defenceless as thou wert, oh, where was then
Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear?
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when
Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,
The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like deer.

'The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead;
The vultures to the conqueror's banner true,
Who feed where Desolation first has fed,
And whose wings rain contagion; — how they fled,
When like Apollo, from his golden bow,
The Pythian of the age one arrow sped

And smiled! — The spoilers tempt no second blow;
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying low.

'The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn;
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
Is gathered into death without a dawn,
And the immortal stars awake again;
So is it in the world of living men:
A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight
Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when
It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night.'

Thus ceased she: and the mountain shepherds came,
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent;
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
Over his living head like Heaven is bent,
An early but enduring monument,
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song
In sorrow: from her wilds Ierne sent
The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,
And love taught grief to fall like music from his tongue.

Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,
A phantom among men, companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,
Actæon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

A pardlike Spirit beautiful and swift — A Love in desolation masked; — a Power
Girt round with weakness; — it can scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour;
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
A breaking billow; — even whilst we speak
Is it not broken? On the withering flower
The killing sun smiles brightly; on a cheek
The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may break.

His head was bound with pansies overblown,
And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue;
And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,
Round whose rude shaft dark ivy tresses grew
Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,
Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of that crew
He came the last, neglected and apart;
A herd-abandoned deer, struck by the hunter's dart.

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle band
Who in another's fate now wept his own;
As, in the accents of an unknown land,
He sung new sorrow; sad Urania scanned
The Stranger's mien, and murmured: 'Who art thou?'
He answered not, but with a sudden hand
Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,
Which was like Cain's or Christ's — Oh! that it should be so!

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?
Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?
What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,
In mockery of monumental stone,
The heavy heart heaving without a moan?
If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,
Taught, soothed, loved, honored the departed one,
Let me not vex with inharmonious sighs
The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.

Our Adonais has drunk poison — oh!
What deaf and viperous murderer could crown
Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?
The nameless worm would now itself disown:
It felt yet could escape the magic tone

Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,
But what was howling in one breast alone,
Silent with expectation of the song,
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame!
Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me,
Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!
But be thyself, and know thyself to be!
And ever at thy season be thou free
To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow:
Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee;
Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,
And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt — as now.

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
Far from these carrion kites that scream below;
He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead;
Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now. —
Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow
Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
Through time and change, unquenchably the same,
Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of shame.

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep —
He hath awakened from the dream of life —
'T is we who, lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
And in mad trance strike with our spirit's knife
Invulnerable nothings. — *We* decay
Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
Convulse us and consume us day by day,
And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

He has outsoared the shadow of our night;
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
Can touch him not and torture not again;
From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure, and now can never mourn
A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain;
Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

He lives, he wakes — 'tis Death is dead, not he;
Mourn not for Adonais. — Thou young Dawn,
Turn all thy dew to splendor, for from thee
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;
Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!
Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air,
Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown
O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare
Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

He is made one with Nature: there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
Which wields the world with never wearied love,
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there
All new successions to the forms they wear;
Torturing the unwilling dross that checks its flight

To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

The splendors of the firmament of time
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;
Like stars to their appointed height they climb
And death is a low mist which cannot blot
The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
And love and life contend in it, for what
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there
And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown
Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,
Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
Rose pale, his solemn agony had not
Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought
And as he fell and as he lived and loved,
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved:
Oblivion, as they rose, shrank like a thing reproved.

And many more, whose names on Earth are dark
But whose transmitted effluence cannot die
So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
'Thou art become as one of us,' they cry,
'It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long
Swung blind in unascended majesty,
Silent alone amid an Heaven of Song.
Assume thy winged throne, thou Vesper of our throng!'

Who mourns for Adonais? oh, come forth,
Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.
Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;
As from a center, dart thy spirit's light
Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
Satiate the void circumference: then shrink
Even to a point within our day and night;
And keep thy heart light, lest it make thee sink,
When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the brink.

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulcher,
O, not of him, but of our joy: 't is naught
That ages, empires, and religions there
Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;
For such as he can lend,— they borrow not
Glory from those who made the world their prey;
And he is gathered to the kings of thought
Who waged contention with their time's decay,
And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

Go thou to Rome,— at once the Paradise,
The grave, the city, and the wilderness;
And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise
And flowering weeds and fragrant copses dress
The bones of Desolation's nakedness
Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall lead
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access
Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead,
A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread.

And gray walls moulder round, on which dull Time
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
Pavilioning the dust of him who planned
This refuge for his memory, doth stand
Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath,
A field is spread, on which a newer band
Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath.

Here pause: these graves are all too young as yet
To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned

Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,
Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,
Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find
Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,
Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind
Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die,
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!
Follow where all is fled!—Rome's azure sky,
Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

Why linger? why turn back, why shrink, my Heart?
Thy hopes are gone before: from all things here
They have departed; thou shouldst now depart!
A light is past from the revolving year,
And man, and woman; and what still is dear
Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.
The soft sky smiles,—the low wind whispers near;
'T is Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,
No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
That Beauty in which all things work and move,
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
Which, through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst, now beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given;
The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven!
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar:
Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

(1821)

FINAL CHORUS FROM HELLAS

The world's great age begins anew,
The golden years return,
The earth doth like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn:
Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam,
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
From waves serener far;
A new Peneus rolls his fountains
Against the morning-star.
Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,
Fraught with a later prize;
Another Orpheus sings again,
And loves, and weeps, and dies.
A new Ulysses leaves once more
Calypso for his native shore.

O, write no more the tale of Troy,
If earth Death's scroll must be!
Nor mix with Laian rage the joy
Which dawns upon the free:
Although a subtler Sphinx renew
Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise,
And to remoter time

Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
The splendor of its prime;
And leave, if naught so bright may live,
All earth can take or Heaven can give.

Saturn and Love their long repose
Shall burst, more bright and good
Than all who fell, than One who rose,
Than many unsubdued:
Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,
But votive tears and symbol flowers.

O cease! must hate and death return?
Cease! must men kill and die?
Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn
Of bitter prophecy.
The world is weary of the past,
O might it die or rest at last!

(1822)

TO NIGHT

Swiftly walk over the western wave,
Spirit of Night!
Out of the misty eastern cave,
Where all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear,—
Swift be thy flight!

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,
Star in-wrought!
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day;
Kiss her until she be wearied out:
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand —
Come, long sought!

When I arose and saw the dawn,
I sighed for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
And noon-day heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turned to his rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest,
I sighed for thee.

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
Wouldst thou me?
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmured like a noon-tide bee,
Shall I nestle near thy side?
Wouldst thou me? — And I replied,
No, not thee!

Death will come when thou art dead,
Soon, too soon —
Sleep will come when thou art fled;
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, belovèd Night —
Swift be thine approaching flight,
Come soon, soon!

(1824)

TO——

One word is too often profaned
For me to profane it,
One feeling too falsely disdained
For thee to disdain it.
One hope is too like despair
For prudence to smother,
And pity from thee more dear
Than that from another.

I can give not what men call love,
But wilt thou accept not
The worship the heart lifts above
And the Heavens reject not,
The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow?

(1824)

WITH A GUITAR, TO JANE

Ariel to Miranda.— Take
This slave of Music, for the sake
Of him who is the slave of thee,
And teach it all the harmony
In which thou canst, and only thou,
Make the delighted spirit glow,
Till joy denies itself again,
And, too intense, is turned to pain;
For by permission and command
Of thine own Prince Ferdinand,
Poor Ariel sends this silent token
Of more than ever can be spoken;
Your guardian spirit, Ariel, who,
From life to life, must still pursue
Your happiness; — for thus alone
Can Ariel ever find his own.
From Prospero's enchanted cell,
As the mighty verses tell,
To the throne of Naples, he
Lit you o'er the trackless sea,
Flitting on, your prow before,
Like a living meteor.
When you die, the silent Moon,
In her interlunar swoon,
Is not sadder in her cell
Than deserted Ariel.

When you live again on earth,
Like an unseen star of birth,
Ariel guides you o'er the sea
Of life from your nativity.
Many changes have been run,
Since Ferdinand and you begun
Your course of love, and Ariel still
Has tracked your steps, and served your will;
Now, in humbler, happier lot,
This is all remembered not;
And now, alas! the poor sprite is
Imprisoned, for some fault of his,
In a body like a grave;—
From you he only dares to crave,
For his service and his sorrow,
A smile to-day, a song to-morrow.

The artist who this idol wrought,
To echo all harmonious thought,
Felled a tree, while on the steep
The woods were in their winter sleep,
Rocked in that repose divine
On the wind-swept Apennine;
And dreaming, some of Autumn past,
And some of Spring approaching fast,
And some of April buds and showers,
And some of songs in July bowers,
And all of love; and so this tree,—
Oh, that such our death may be!—
Died in sleep, and felt no pain,
To live in happier form again:
From which, beneath Heaven's fairest star,
The artist wrought this loved Guitar,
And taught it justly to reply,
To all who question skilfully,
In language gentle as thine own;
Whispering in enamored tone
Sweet oracles of woods and dells,
And summer winds in sylvan cells;
For it had learnt all harmonies
Of the plains and of the skies,
Of the forests and the mountains,
And the many-voicèd fountains;
The clearest echoes of the hills,
The softest notes of falling rills,
The melodies of birds and bees,
The murmuring of summer seas,
And pattering rain, and breathing dew
And airs of evening; and it knew
That seldom-heard mysterious sound,
Which, driven on its diurnal round,
As it floats through boundless day,
Our world enkindles on its way—
All this it knows, but will not tell
To those who cannot question well
The spirit that inhabits it;
It talks according to the wit
Of its companions; and no more
Is heard than has been felt before,
By those who tempt it to betray
These secrets of an elder day:
But sweetly as its answers will
Flatter hands of perfect skill,
It keeps its highest, holiest tone
For our belovèd Jane alone.

(1832–1833)

LINES: WHEN THE LAMP IS SHATTERED

When the lamp is shattered
The light in the dust lies dead—
When the cloud is scattered
The rainbow's glory is shed.
When the lute is broken,
Sweet tones are remembered not;
When the lips have spoken,
Loved accents are soon forgot.

As music and splendor
Survive not the lamp and the lute,
The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute:—
No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind through a ruined cell,
Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

When hearts have once mingled
Love first leaves the well-built nest,
The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possessed.
O Love! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

Its passions will rock thee
As the storms rock the ravens on high:
Bright reason will mock thee,
Like the sun from a wintry sky.
From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home
Leave thee naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds come.

(1824)

A DIRGE

Rough wind, that moanest loud
Grief too sad for song;
Wild wind, when sullen cloud
Knells all the night long;
Sad storm, whose tears are vain,
Bare woods, whose branches strain,
Deep caves and dreary main,
Wail, for the world's wrong!

(1824)

JOHN KEATS (1795–1821).

The parents of John Keats were living, at the time of his birth, at the Swan-and-Hoop stable in Finsbury, London. As a boy Keats was a sturdy fellow, with a hot temper, fond of fighting, fond of 'gold-finches, tomtits, minnows, mice, tickle-backs, dace, cock-salmons, and all the whole tribe of the bushes and the brooks.' It was toward the end of his school-days that he was set dreaming by Spenser's *Faery Queen*. He persevered, however, in his medical studies, passed his surgeon's examination with credit in 1815, and proved a skilful operator. But he was excessively sensitive to the nervous strain incident to surgery and, also, he was pining for a poetic career, 'Like a sick eagle looking at the sky.' Early in 1816 he met Leigh Hunt and through him numerous poets and artists, including Shelley, Wordsworth, and the painter Haydon. Shelley took a lively interest in him and attempted to show him hospitality. Wordsworth, whom he admired highly, is said to have chilled him by remarking after Keats had recited his *Hymn to Pan* for the benefit of a company: 'A pretty piece of Paganism!' To Haydon he owed something of an initiation into art and an opportunity to lend thirty pounds. In May, 1816, Hunt published in his *Examiner* the sonnet 'O Solitude! if I with thee must dwell,' and Keats had, so to speak, his first taste of blood. He now gave himself with increasing constancy to composition. His first volume came in March, 1817, and a year later *Endymion*. Chiefly because of Keats's friendship with Hunt, who was hated for his political opinions, these earlier volumes were sneeringly reviewed. Though Keats was indignant, it was by no means, '*The Quarterly*, so savage and tartarly' that killed him. Partially from nursing his brother Tom through his last illness and partially, perhaps, from inherited susceptibility he became a victim of consumption. A few months snatched from the grave, harassed by insufficient means, 'the law's delay,' and 'the pangs of disprized love,' produced the more mature and discreet work which lies between *Endymion* and his last sonnet ('Bright Star would I were steadfast as thou art'), composed on shipboard as he was leaving for Italy to die. Brief as was Shelley's career, all his poems of real importance were written between his twenty-sixth and thirtieth years; the corresponding years Keats never knew. Yet his poetry is far more than the poetry of promise. Some of it is 'as final as Shakspere.'

KEEN, FITFUL GUSTS ARE WHISPERING HERE AND THERE

Keen, fitful gusts are whispering here and there
Among the bushes half leafless, and dry;
The stars look very cold about the sky,
And I have many miles on foot to fare.
Yet feel I little of the cool bleak air,
Or of the dead leaves rustling drearily,
Or of those silver lamps that burn on high,
Or of the distance from home's pleasant lair:
For I am brimful of the friendliness
That in a little cottage I have found;
Of fair-haired Milton's eloquent distress,
And all his love for gentle Lycid drowned;
Of lovely Laura in her light green dress,
And faithful Petrarch gloriously crowned.

(1816)

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

Much have I traveled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific — and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise —
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

(1816)

From ENDYMION, BOOK I

PROEM

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
For simple sheep: and such are daffodils
With the green world they live in; and clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid-forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms:
And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead;
All lovely tales that we have heard or read:
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences
For one short hour; no, even as the trees
That whisper round a temple become soon
Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,
The passion poesy, glories infinite,
Haunt us till they become a cheering light
Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast,
That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'ercast,
They alway must be with us, or we die.

Therefore, 'tis with full happiness that I
Will trace the story of Endymion.
The very music of the name has gone
Into my being, and each pleasant scene
Is growing fresh before me as the green
Of our own valleys: so I will begin
Now while I cannot hear the city's din;
Now while the early budders are just new,
And run in mazes of the youngest hue
About old forests; while the willow trails
Its delicate amber; and the dairy pails
Bring home increase of milk. And, as the year
Grows lush in juicy stalks, I'll smoothly steer
My little boat, for many quiet hours,
With streams that deepen freshly into bowers.
Many and many a verse I hope to write,
Before the daisies, vermeil rimmed and white,
Hide in deep herbage; and ere yet the bees
Hum about globes of clover and sweet peas,
I must be near the middle of my story.
O may no wintry season, bare and hoary,
See it half finished: but let Autumn bold,
With universal tinge of sober gold,
Be all about me when I make an end.
And now at once, adventuresome, I send
My herald thought into a wilderness:
There let its trumpet blow, and quickly dress
My uncertain path with green, that I may speed
Easily onward, thorough flowers and weed.

(1818)

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

St. Agnes' Eve — Ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seemed taking flight for heaven, without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meager, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
The sculptured dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Emprisoned in black, purgatorial rails:
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
Flattered to tears this aged man and poor;
But no — already had his deathbell rung;
The joys of all his life were said and sung:
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve:
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;
And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:
The carvèd angels, ever eager-eyed,
Stared where upon their heads the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their breasts.

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting fairily
The brain, new stuffed, in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and winged St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honeyed middle of the night
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline;
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,
Fixed on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by — she heeded not at all: in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retired; not cooled by high disdain,
But she saw not: her heart was otherwhere:
She sighed for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:
The hallowed hour was near at hand: she sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the thronged resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hoodwinked with faery fancy; all amort,
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She lingered still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttressed from moonlight, stands he, and implores
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
But for one moment in the tedious hours,
That he might gaze and worship all unseen;
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss — in sooth such things have been.

He ventures in: let no buzzed whisper tell:
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel:
For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations howl
Against his lineage: not one breast affords
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature came,
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
The sound of merriment and chorus bland:

He startled her; but soon she knew his face,
And grasped his fingers in her palsied hand,
Saying, 'Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place;
They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race!

Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish Hildebrand;
He had a fever late, and in the fit
He cursèd thee and thine, both house and land:
Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me! flit!
Flit like a ghost away.'—'Ah, Gossip dear,
We're safe enough; here in this armchair sit,
And tell me how'—'Good Saints! not here, not here;
'Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier.'

He followed through a lowly archèd way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume;
And as she muttered 'Well-a—well-a-day!'
He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
'Now tell me where is Madeline,' said he,
'O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously.'

'St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve—
Yet men will murder upon holy days:
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
To venture so; it fills me with amaze
To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes' Eve!
God's help! my lady fair the conjurer plays
This very night; good angels her deceive!
But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve.'

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
Who keepeth closed a wond'rous riddle-book,
As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his painèd heart
Made purple riot: then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:
'A cruel man and impious thou art:
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
Alone with her good angels, far apart
From wicked men like thee. Go, go!—I deem
Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem.'

'I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,'
Quoth Porphyro: 'O may I ne'er find grace
When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
Or look with ruffian passion in her face:
Good Angela, believe me by these tears;
Or I will, even in a moment's space,
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
And beard them, though they be more fanged than wolves and bears.'

'Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken churchyard thing,
Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
Were never missed.' Thus plaining, doth she bring
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,
That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legioned fairies paced the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met,

Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

'It shall be as thou wishest,' said the Dame:
'All cates and dainties shall be stored there
Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame
Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead.'

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly passed;
The dame returned, and whispered in his ear
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hushed, and chaste;
Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmèd maid,
Rose, like a missioned spirit, unaware:
With silver taper's light, and pious care,
She turned, and down the agèd gossip led
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove frayed and fled.

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:
She closed the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

A casement high and triple arched there was,
All garlanded with carven imag'ries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass.
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blushed with blood of queens and kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seemed a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven: Porphyro grew faint:
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,
Of all its wreathèd pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warmèd jewels one by one;
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees;
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in seaweed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplexed she lay.
Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppressed
Her soothèd limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;
Blissfully havened both from joy and pain;
Clasped like a missal where swart Paynims pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

Stolen to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,

And listened to her breathing, if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness;
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
And breathed himself: then from the closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hushed carpet, silent, stepped,
And 'tween the curtains peeped, where, lo! — how fast she slept.

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half-anguished, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet: —
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone: —
The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanchèd linen, smooth, and lavendered,
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
With jellies soother than the creamy curd.
And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferred
From Fez; and spicèd dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon.

These delicates he heaped with glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathèd silver: sumptuous they stand
In the retired quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light. —
'And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:
Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache.'

Thus whispering, his warm, unnervèd arm
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
By the dusk curtains: — 't was a midnight charm
Impossible to melt as icèd stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam:
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
It seemed he never, never could redeem
From such a stedfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mused awhile, entoiled in woofèd phantasies.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute, —
Tumultuous, — and, in chords that tenderest be,
He played an ancient ditty, long since mute.
In Provence called, 'La belle dame sans mercy: '
Close to her ear touching the melody; —
Wherewith disturbed, she uttered a soft moan:
He ceased — she panted quick — and suddenly
Her blue affrayèd eyes wide open shone:
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
There was a painful change, that nigh expelled
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;
Who knelt, with joinèd hands and piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she looked so dreamingly.

'Ah, Porphyro!' said she, 'but even now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;
And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear:
How changed thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!
Oh, leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go.'

Beyond a mortal man impassioned far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flushed, and like a throbbing star
Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odor with the violet, —
Solution sweet: meantime the frost wind blows
Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

'T is dark; quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet:

'This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!'
'T is dark: the icèd gusts still rave and beat:
'No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—
Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?
I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
Though thou forsakest a deceivèd thing;—
A dove forlorn and lost with sick unprunèd wing.'

'My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil dyed?
Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
After so many hours of toil and quest,
A famished pilgrim,—saved by a miracle.
Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well
To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

'Hark! 'tis an elfin-storm from faery land,
Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:
Arise—arise! the morning is at hand;—
The bloated wassailers will never heed:—
Let us away, my love, with happy speed;
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—
Drowned all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead;
Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee.'

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all around,
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.—
In all the house was heard no human sound.
A chain-drooped lamp was flickering by each door;
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
Fluttered in the besieging wind's uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;
Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide;
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his side:
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide:—
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;—
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

And they are gone: ay, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old
Died palsy-twitched, with meager face deform;
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought for slept among his ashes cold.

(1820)

ODE

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Have ye souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new?
Yes, and those of heaven commune
With the spheres of sun and moon;
With the noise of fountains wond'rous,
And the parle of voices thund'rous;
With the whisper of heaven's trees
And one another, in soft ease
Seated on Elysian lawns
Browsed by none but Dian's fawns;
Underneath large blue-bells tented,
Where the daisies are rose-scented,
And the rose herself has got
Perfume which on earth is not;
Where the nightingale doth sing
Not a senseless, trancèd thing,
But divine melodious truth;
Philosophic numbers smooth;
Tales and golden histories
Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
On the earth ye live again;
An the souls ye left behind you
Teach us, here, the way to find you,
Where your other souls are joying,

Never slumbered, never cloying.
Here, your earth-born souls still speak
To mortals, of their little week;
Of their sorrows and delights;
Of their passions and their spites;
Of their glory and their shame;
What doth strengthen and what maim.
Thus ye teach us, every day,
Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Ye have souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new!

(1820)

ROBIN HOOD

No! those days are gone away,
And their hours are old and gray,
And their minutes buried all
Under the down-trodden pall
Of the leaves of many years:
Many times have winter's shears,
Frozen North, and chilling East,
Sounded tempests to the feast
Of the forest's whispering fleeces.
Since men knew nor rent nor leases.

No, the bugle sounds no more,
And the twanging bow no more;
Silent is the ivory shrill
Past the heath and up the hill;
There is no mid-forest laugh,
Where lone Echo gives the half
To some wight, amazed to hear
Jesting, deep in forest drear.

On the fairest time of June
You may go, with sun or moon,
Or the seven stars to light you,
Or the polar ray to right you;
But you never may behold
Little John, or Robin bold;
Never one, of all the clan,
Thrumming on an empty can
Some old hunting ditty, while
He doth his green way beguile
To fair hostess Merriment,
Down beside the pasture Trent;
For he left the merry tale
Messenger for spicy ale.

Gone, the merry morris din;
Gone, the song of Gamelyn;
Gone, the tough-belted outlaw
Idling in the 'grene shawe;'
All are gone away and past!

And if Robin should be cast
Sudden from his turfèd grave,
And if Marian should have
Once again her forest days,
She would weep, and he would craze:
He would swear, for all his oaks,
Fallen beneath the dockyard strokes,
Have rotted on the briny seas;
She would weep that her wild bees
Sang not to her — strange! that honey
Can't be got without hard money!

So it is: yet let us sing,
Honor to the old bow-string!
Honor to the bugle-horn!
Honor to the woods unshorn!
Honor to the Lincoln green!
Honor to the archer keen!
Honor to tight Little John,
And the horse he rode upon!
Honor to bold Robin Hood,
Sleeping in the underwood!
Honor to Maid Marian,
And to all the Sherwood-clan!
Though their days have hurried by,
Let us two a burden try.

(1820)

LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?
Have ye tippled drink more fine
Than mine host's Canary wine?
Or are fruits of Paradise
Sweeter than those dainty pies
Of venison? O generous food!
Drest as though bold Robin Hood
Would, with his maid Marian,
Sup and bowse from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day
Mine host's sign-board flew away,
Nobody knew whither, till
An astrologer's old quill
To a sheepskin gave the story,
Said he saw you in your glory,
Underneath a new old-sign
Sipping beverage divine,
And pledging with contented smack
The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

(1820)

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss
Though winning near the goal — yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearièd,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands dressed?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,'— that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

(1820)

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'T is not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness.—
That thou, light wingèd Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

O for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cooled a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stainèd mouth;

That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and specter-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond tomorrow.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Clustered around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmèd darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets covered up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Called him soft names in many a musèd rime,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain —
To thy high requiem become a sod.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down:
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn:
The same that oft-times hath
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is famed to do, deceiving elf,
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 't is buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music: — Do I wake or sleep?

(1819)

ODE ON MELANCHOLY

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist
Wolf's-bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kissed
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;
Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl
A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;

For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
And hides the green hill in an April shroud:
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
Or on the rainbow of a salt sandwave,
Or on the wealth of globèd peonies;
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

She dwells with Beauty — Beauty that must die;
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips:
Ay, in the very temple of Delight
Veiled Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

(1820)

TO AUTUMN

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom friend of the maturing sun:
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twinèd flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing: and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

(1820)

HYPERION

A FRAGMENT

BOOK I

Deep in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
Sat gray-haired Saturn, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence round about his lair;
Forest on forest hung about his head
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feathered grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.

A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more
By reason of his fallen divinity
Spreading a shade: the Naiad 'mid her reeds
Pressed her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large footmarks went,
No further than to where his feet had strayed
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unsceptered; and his realmless eyes were closed;
While his bowed head seemed list'ning to the Earth,
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seemed no force could wake him from his place;
But there came one, who with a kindred hand
Touched his wide shoulders, after bending low
With reverence, though to one who knew it not.
She was a Goddess of the infant world;
By her in stature the tall Amazon
Had stood a pigmy's height: she would have ta'en
Achilles by the hair and bent his neck;
Or with a finger stayed Ixion's wheel.
Her face was large as that of Memphian sphinx,
Pedestaled haply in a palace court,
When sages looked to Egypt for their lore.
But oh! how unlike marble was that face:
How beautiful, if sorrow had not made
Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.
There was a listening fear in her regard,
As if calamity had but begun:
As if the vanward clouds of evil days
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
Was with its storèd thunder laboring up.
One hand she pressed upon that aching spot
Where beats the human heart, as if just there,
Though an immortal, she felt cruel pain;
The other upon Saturn's bended neck
She laid, and to the level of his ear
Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake
In solemn tenor and deep organ tone:
Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
Would come in these like accents; O how frail
To that large utterance of the early Gods!
'Saturn, look up! — though wherefore, poor old King?
I have no comfort for thee, no, not one:
I cannot say, "O wherefore sleepest thou?"
For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth
Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God;
And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,
Has from thy scepter passed; and all the air
Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.
Thy thunder, conscious of the new command,
Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house;
And thy sharp lightning in unpractised hands
Scorches and burns our once serene domain.
O aching time! O moments big as years!
All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth,
And press it so upon our weary griefs
That unbelief has not a space to breathe.
Saturn, sleep on: — O thoughtless, why did I
Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?
Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?
Saturn, sleep on! while at thy feet I weep.'

As when, upon a trancèd summer night,
Those green-robed senators of mighty woods,
Tall oaks, branch-charmèd by the earnest stars,
Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,
Save from one gradual solitary gust
Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,
As if the ebbing air had but one wave;
So came these words and went; the while in tears
She touched her fair large forehead to the ground,
Just where her falling hair might be outspread
A soft and silken mat for Saturn's feet.
One moon, with alteration slow, had shed
Her silver seasons four upon the night,
And still these two were postured motionless,
Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern;

The frozen God still couchant on the earth,
And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet:
Until at length old Saturn lifted up
His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone,
And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
And that fair kneeling Goddess; and then spake,
As with a palsied tongue, and while his beard
Shook horrid with such aspen-malady:
'O tender spouse of gold Hyperion,
Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face;
Look up, and let me see our doom in it;
Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape
Is Saturn's; tell me, if thou hear'st the voice
Of Saturn; tell me, if this wrinkling brow,
Naked and bare of its great diadem,
Peers like the front of Saturn. Who had power
To make me desolate? whence came the strength?
How was it nurtured to such bursting forth,
While Fate seemed strangled in my nervous grasp?
But it is so; and I am smothered up,
And buried from all godlike exercise
Of influence benign on planets pale,
Of admonitions to the winds, and seas,
Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting,
And all those acts which Deity supreme
Doth ease its heart of love in.— I am gone
Away from my own bosom: I have left
My strong identity, my real self,
Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit
Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea, search!
Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them round
Upon all space: space starred, and lorn of light;
Space regioned with life-air; and barren void;
Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell.—
Search, Thea, search! and tell me, if thou seest
A certain shape or shadow, making way
With wings or chariot fierce to repossess
A heaven he lost erewhile: it must — it must
Be of ripe progress — Saturn must be King,
Yes, there must be a golden victory;
There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets blown
Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival
Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,
Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir
Of strings in hollow shells; and there shall be
Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
Of the sky-children; I will give command:
Thea! Thea! Thea! where is Saturn?'

This passion lifted him upon his feet,
And made his hands to struggle in the air,
His Druid locks to shake and ooze with sweat,
His eyes to fever out, his voice to cease.
He stood, and heard not Thea's sobbing deep;
A little time, and then again he snatched
Utterance thus.— 'But cannot I create?
Cannot I form? Cannot I fashion forth
Another world, another universe,
To overbear and crumble this to nought?
Where is another chaos? Where?'— That word
Found way unto Olympus, and made quake
The rebel three.— Thea was startled up,
And in her bearing was a sort of hope,
As thus she quick-voiced spake, yet full of awe.

'This cheers our fallen house: come to our friends,
O Saturn! come away, and give them heart:
I know the covert, for thence came I hither.'
Thus brief; then with beseeching eyes she went
With backward footing through the shade a space:
He followed, and she turned to lead the way
Through aged boughs, that yielded like the mist
Which eagles cleave upmounting from their nest.

Meanwhile in other realms big tears were shed,
More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,
Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe;
The Titans fierce, self-hid, or prison-bound,
Groaned for the old allegiance once more,
And listened in sharp pain for Saturn's voice.
But one of the whole mammoth-brood still kept
His sov'reignty, and rule, and majesty;—

Blazing Hyperion on his orbèd fire
Still sat, still snuff'd the incense, teeming up
From man to the sun's God; yet unsecure:
For as among us mortals omens drear
Fright and perplex, so also shuddered he—
Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech,
Or the familiar visiting of one
Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,
Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp;
But horrors, portioned to a giant nerve,
Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace bright
Bastioned with pyramids of glowing gold.
And touched with shade of bronzèd obelisks,
Glared a blood-red through all its thousand courts,
Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries;
And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds
Flushed angerly: while sometimes eagle's wings,
Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,
Darkened the place; and neighing steeds were heard,
Not heard before by Gods or wondering men.
Also, when he would taste the spicy wreaths
Of incense, breathed aloft from sacred hills,
Instead of sweets, his ample palate took
Savor of poisonous brass and metal sick:
And so, when harbored in the sleepy west,
After the full completion of fair day,—
For rest divine upon exalted couch
And slumber in the arms of melody,
He paced away the pleasant hours of ease
With stride colossal, on from hall to hall;
While far within each aisle and deep recess,
His wingèd minions in close clusters stood,
Amazed and full of fear; like anxious men
Who on wide plains gather in panting troops,
When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers.
Even now, while Saturn, roused from icy trance.
Went step for step with Thea through the woods,
Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
Came slope upon the threshold of the west;
Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope
In smoothest silence, save what solemn tubes,
Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet
And wandering sounds, slow-breathèd melodies;
And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,
In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye,
That inlet to severe magnificence
Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He entered, but he entered full of wrath;
His flaming robes streamed out beyond his heels,
And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,
That scared away the meek ethereal Hours
And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared,
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,
Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathèd light,
And diamond-pavèd lustrous long arcades,
Until he reached the great main cupola;
There standing fierce beneath, he stamped his foot,
And from the basements deep to the high towers
Jarred his own golden region; and before
The quavering thunder thereupon had ceased,
His voice leapt out, despite of godlike curb,
To this result: 'O dreams of day and night!
O monstrous forms! O effigies of pain!
O specters busy in a cold, cold gloom!
O lank-eared Phantoms of black-weeded pools!
Why do I know ye? why have I seen ye? why
Is my eternal essence thus distraught
To see and to behold these horrors new?
Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall?
Am I to leave this haven of my rest,
This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,
This calm luxuriance of blissful light,
These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes,
Of all my lucent empire? It is left
Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine.
The blaze, the splendor, and the symmetry,
I cannot see — but darkness, death and darkness.
Even here, into my center of repose,
The shady visions come to domineer,
Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp.—
Fall! — No, by Tellus and her briny robes!
Over the fiery frontier of my realms
I will advance a terrible right arm,
Shall scare that infant thunderer, rebel Jove,

And bid old Saturn take his throne again.'—
He spake and ceased, the while a heavier threat
Held struggle with his throat but came not forth:
For as in theaters of crowded men
Hubbub increases more they call out 'Hush!'
So at Hyperion's words the Phantoms pale
Bestirred themselves, thrice horrible and cold;
And from the mirrored level where he stood
A mist arose, as from a scummy marsh.
At this, through all his bulk an agony
Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown,
Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular
Making slow way, with head and neck convulsed
From over-strainèd might. Released, he fled
To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours
Before the dawn in season due should blush,
He breathed fierce breath against the sleepy portals,
Cleared them of heavy vapors, burst them wide
Suddenly on the ocean's chilly streams.
The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode
Each day from east to west the heavens through,
Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds;
Not therefore veilèd quite, blindfold, and hid,
But ever and anon the glancing spheres,
Circles, and arcs, and broad-belting colure,
Glowed through, and wrought upon the muffling dark
Sweet-shapèd lightnings from the nadir deep
Up to the Zenith,—hieroglyphics old,
Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers
Then living on the earth, with laboring thought
Won from the gaze of many centuries:
Now lost, save what we find in remnants huge
Of stone, or marble swart; their import gone,
Their wisdom long since fled. Two wings this orb
Possessed for glory, two fair argent wings,
Ever exalted at the God's approach:
And now, from forth the gloom their plumes immense
Rose, one by one, till all outspreaded were;
While still the dazzling globe maintained eclipse,
Awaiting for Hyperion's command.
Fain would he have commanded, fain took throne
And bid the day begin, if but for change.
He might not:—No, though a primeval God:
The sacred seasons might not be disturbed.
Therefore the operations of the dawn
Stayed in their birth, even as here 'tis told.
Those silver wings expanded sisterly,
Eager to sail their orb; the porches wide
Opened upon the dusk demesnes of night;
And the bright Titan, phrenzied with new woes,
Unused to bend, by hard compulsion bent
His spirit to the sorrow of the time;
And all along a dismal rack of clouds,
Upon the boundaries of day and night,
He stretched himself in grief and radiance faint.
There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars
Looked down on him with pity, and the voice
Of Cœlus, from the universal space,
Thus whispered low and solemn in his ear.
'O brightest of my children dear, earth-born
And sky-engendered, Son of Mysteries
All unrevealèd even to the powers
Which met at thy creating; at whose joy
And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,
I, Cœlus, wonder, how they came and whence;
And at the fruits thereof what shapes they be,
Distinct, and visible; symbols divine,
Manifestations of that beauteous life
Diffused unseen throughout eternal space;
Of these new-formed art thou, oh brightest child!
Of these, thy brethren and the Goddesses!
There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion
Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,
I saw my first-born tumbled from his throne!
To me his arms were spread, to me his voice
Found way from forth the thunders round his head!
Pale wox I and in vapors hid my face.
Art thou, too, near such doom? vague fear there is:
For I have seen my sons most unlike Gods.
Divine ye were created, and divine
In sad demeanor, solemn, undisturbed,
Unruffled like high Gods, ye lived and ruled:
Now I behold in you fear, hope, and wrath;
Actions of rage and passion; even as
I see them, on the mortal world beneath,
In men who die.—This is the grief, O Son!

Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall!
Yet do thou strive; as thou art capable,
As thou canst move about, an evident God;
And canst oppose to each malignant hour
Ethereal presence: — I am but a voice;
My life is but the life of winds and tides,
No more than winds and tides can I avail: —
But thou canst. — Be thou therefore in the van
Of circumstance; yea, seize the arrow's barb
Before the tense string murmur. — To the earth!
For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his woes.
Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright sun,
And of thy seasons be a careful nurse.' —
Ere half this region-whisper had come down,
Hyperion arose, and on the stars
Lifted his curvèd lids, and kept them wide
Until it ceased; and still he kept them wide:
And still they were the same bright, patient stars.
Then with a slow incline of his broad breast,
Like to a diver in the pearly seas,
Forward he stooped over the airy shore,
And plunged all noiseless into the deep night.

(1820)

IN A DREAR-NIGHTED DECEMBER

In a drear-nighted December,
Too happy, happy tree,
Thy branches ne'er remember
Their green felicity:
The north cannot undo them,
With a sleety whistle through them;
Nor frozen thawings glue them
From budding at the prime.

In a drear-nighted December,
Too happy, happy brook,
Thy bubblings ne'er remember
Apollo's summer look;
But with a sweet forgetting,
They stay their crystal fretting,
Never, never petting
About the frozen time.

Ah! would 't were so with many
A gentle girl and boy!
But were there ever any
Writhed not at passèd joy
To know the change and feel it,
When there is none to heal it,
Nor numbèd sense to steal it,
Was never said in rime.

(1829)

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

BALLAD

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms!
Alone and palely loitering!
The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms!
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew,
And on thy cheeks a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful — a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She looked at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long.
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said —
'I love thee true.'

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept, and sighed full sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.

And there she lullèd me asleep,
And there I dreamed — Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dreamed
On the cold hill's side.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
They cried — 'La Belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!'

I saw their starved lips in the gloam,
With horrid warning gapèd wide,
And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill's side.

And this is why I sojourn here,
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is withered from the lake
And no birds sing.

(1820)

ON SEEING THE ELGIN MARBLES

My spirit is too weak — mortality
Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,
And each imagined pinnacle and steep
Of godlike hardship tells me I must die
Like a sick Eagle looking at the sky.
Yet 't is a gentle luxury to weep
That I have not the cloudy winds to keep,
Fresh for the opening of the morning's eye.
Such dim-conceivèd glories of the brain
Bring round the heart an undescribable feud;
So do these wonders a most dizzy pain,
That mingles Grecian grandeur with the rude
Wasting of old Time — with a billowy main —
A sun — a shadow of a magnitude.

(1817)

ON THE SEA

It keeps eternal whisperings around
Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
Gluts twice ten thousand caverns, till the spell
Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.
Often 't is in such gentle temper found,
That scarcely will the very smallest shell
Be moved for days from whence it sometime fell,
When last the winds of heaven were unbound.
Oh ye! who have your eye-balls vexed and tired,
Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea;
Oh ye! whose ears are dinned with uproar rude,
Or fed too much with cloying melody,—
Sit ye near some old cavern's mouth, and brood
Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quired!

(1848)

WHEN I HAVE FEARS THAT I MAY CEASE TO BE

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain,
Before high pilèd books, in charact'ry,
Hold like rich garners the full-ripened grain;
When I behold, upon the night's starred face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour!
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never have relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love! — then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

(1848)

BRIGHT STAR! WOULD I WERE STEADFAST AS THOU ART

Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art —
Not in lone splendor hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors —
No — yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillowed upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever — or else swoon to death.

(1848)

NINETEENTH CENTURY LYRICS

For lyric excellence the period of nearly one hundred years between *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) and Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar* (1889) was as eminent as any in our history. Much of this excellence lies in the work of the greater poets, all of whom, from Wordsworth to Tennyson, Browning and Swinburne, will perhaps live to after times for their short flights of song, elegy, idyl, or dramatic monologue rather than by virtue of their more ambitious work. Men of less notable power than the very greatest must particularly depend, for 'a perpetuity of fame,' upon those brief pieces or passages where their imperfect or less sustained genius gets for a moment a perfect, or happy, or distinctive utterance. Literature would be the poorer without these happier snatches of its less distinguished warblers, and the nineteenth century is peculiarly rich in minor singers of this description. One grace of the minor singer is his frequent recognition of his minority and his contentedness to sing in a light or a minor key, leaving the 'C Major of this life' to his robuster brethren. If he lack this self-denial or wisdom, time will not hesitate to do for him what he fails to do for himself. Thus, while Southey's obese epics are strangling in dust we can still enjoy a ballad or two. Landor, with all his elegance and elevation may prove too great a tax on our patience unless we can select out a few choicely cut 'gems of purest ray,' sparkling with gallantry and gracious sentiment. There may be little hope of pleasure in Campbell's *Pleasures of Hope;* but his battle hymns can still bring a tingle to the blood which has any British infusion. The inimitable joviality of Peacock's songs will tempt some to read them in their setting, his novels. Tom Hood, for his humanitarian sympathy, his tragic insight, and his literary refinement when he throws off his Comic Almanac manner, will interest as long as greater and more fortunate poets. The busiest of us can afford to listen for a moment to the bubbling pastoral music of Barnes, 'the Dorsetshire Burns.' We need not entangle ourselves among the fantastic situations and impossible characters of *Death's Jest Book* in order to feel Beddoes' tuneful diabolism; we get the essence of it in his dirges and night pieces. Not the least interesting phase of nineteenth century poetry is its inclination to plane away the barrier between poetry and prose and approach the natural or easy-going manner of colloquial speech. This careless, 'over the walnuts and the wine' kind of talk had been introduced by Byron into his *Don Juan;* the tone is happily and more innocently hit by Tennyson in *Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue;* and is conspicuous in Peacock's songs and in the love poetry of Coventry Patmore. Praed, Thackeray, and Locker-Lampson convey in poetry that nice blending of frivolity, light cynicism, obscured sentiment, and good breeding which characterise the gentle man-of-the-city. In Austin Dobson there is superadded a fragile renaissance of eighteenth century 'teacup times of hood and hoop, Or when the patch was worn.' Most of this poetry is tinged with delicate regret for the fresher, simpler and more heroic times that are gone. The darker and more terrible pessimism which is bred by modern cities found a voice in Thomson's *City of Dreadful Night;* the querulous rebellion of a sensitive but feebler artistic temperament may be heard in the 'Songs' of O'Shaughnessey. Of somewhat more professional scope than any of these were the poems of Mrs. Browning, the most Sapphic of English poetesses; and Miss Rossetti's sad, sweet songs of devotion and renunciation are the best of their kind. The feminine interpretation of love, humanity, and religion found in these two a more adequate expression than elsewhere in English poetry. Finally, the scholarly and sincere, if sometimes harsh, spiritual remonstrances of Arthur Hugh Clough are most worthy to supplement those of Tennyson, Browning and Matthew Arnold.

ROBERT SOUTHEY (1774–1843)

THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM

It was a summer evening,
Old Kaspar's work was done,
And he before his cottage door
Was sitting in the sun,
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

She saw her brother Peterkin
Roll something large and round,

Which he beside the rivulet
In playing there had found;
He came to ask what he had found,
That was so large, and smooth, and round.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy,
Who stood expectant by;
And then the old man shook his head,
And with a natural sigh,
'T is some poor fellow's skull,' said he,
'Who fell in the great victory.

'I find them in the garden,
For there 's many here about;
And often when I go to plough,
The ploughshare turns them out!
For many thousand men,' said he,
'Were slain in that great victory.'

'Now tell me what 't was all about,'
Young Peterkin, he cries;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
With wonder-waiting eyes;
'Now tell us all about the war,
And what they fought each other for.'

'It was the English,' Kaspar cried,
'Who put the French to rout;
But what they fought each other for,
I could not well make out;
But everybody said,' quoth he,
'That 't was a famous victory.

'My father lived at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by;
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
And he was forced to fly;
So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head.

'With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide,
And many a childing mother then,
And new-born baby died;
But things like that, you know, must be
At every famous victory.

'They say it was a shocking sight
After the field was won;
For many thousand bodies here
Lay rotting in the sun;
But things like that, you know, must be
After a famous victory.

'Great praise the Duke of Marlbro' won,
And our good Prince Eugene.'
'Why 't was a very wicked thing!'
Said little Wilhelmine.

'Nay, nay, my little girl,' quoth he,
'It was a famous victory.

'And everybody praised the Duke
Who this great fight did win.'
'But what good came of it at last?'
Quoth little Peterkin.
'Why that I cannot tell,' said he,
'But 't was a famous victory.'

(1805)

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR
(1775–1864)

ROSE AYLMER

Ah, what avails the sceptered race,
Ah, what the form divine!
What every virtue, every grace!
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.
Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see,
A night of memories and of sighs
I consecrate to thee.

(1806)

MILD IS THE PARTING YEAR

Mild is the parting year, and sweet
The odor of the falling spray;
Life passes on more rudely fleet,
And balmless is its closing day.

I wait its close, I court its gloom,
But mourn that never must there fall
Or on my breast or on my tomb
The tear that would have soothed it all.

(1831)

PAST RUINED ILION

Past ruined Ilion Helen lives,
Alcestis rises from the shades;
Verse calls them forth; 't is verse that gives
Immortal youth to mortal maids.

Soon shall Oblivion's deepening veil
Hide all the peopled hills you see,
The gay, the proud, while lovers hail
These many summers you and me.

(1831)

THE DEATH OF ARTEMIDORA

'Artemidora! Gods invisible,
While thou art lying faint along the couch.

Have tied the sandal to thy slender feet
And stand beside thee, ready to convey
Thy weary steps where other rivers flow.
Refreshing shades will waft thy weariness
Away, and voices like thy own come near
And nearer, and solicit an embrace.'
Artemidora sighed, and would have pressed
The hand now pressing hers, but was too weak.
Iris stood over her dark hair unseen
While thus Elpenor spake. He looked into
Eyes that had given light and life erewhile
To those above them, but now dim with tears
And wakefulness. Again he spake of joy
Eternal. At that word, that sad word, *joy*,
Faithful and fond her bosom heaved once more:
Her head fell back; and now a loud deep sob
Swelled through the darkened chamber; 't was not hers.

(1836)

DIRCE

Stand close around, ye Stygian set,
With Dirce in one boat conveyed,
Or Charon, seeing, may forget
That he is old, and she a shade.

(1836)

ON LUCRETIA BORGIA'S HAIR

Borgia, thou once wert almost too august
And high for adoration; now thou 'rt dust;
All that remains of thee these plaits unfold,
Calm hair meandering in pellucid gold.

(1837)

MEMORY AND PRIDE

'Do you remember me? or are you proud?'
Lightly advancing through her star-trimmed crowd,
Ianthe said, and looked into my eyes.
'A *yes*, a *yes*, to both: for Memory
Where you but once have been must ever be,
And at your voice Pride from his throne must rise.'

(1846)

THE LOVE OF OTHER YEARS

No, my own love of other years!
No, it must never be.
Much rests with you that yet endears,
Alas! but what with me?
Could those bright years o'er me revolve
So gay, o'er you so fair,
The pearl of life we would dissolve
And each the cup might share.
You show that truth can ne'er decay,
Whatever fate befalls;
I, that the myrtle and the bay
Shoot fresh on ruined walls.

(1846)

TO ROBERT BROWNING

There is delight in singing, though none hear
Beside the singer; and there is delight
In praising, tho' the praiser sit alone
And see the praised far off him, far above.
Shakspere is not our poet, but the world's,
Therefore on him no speech! and brief for thee,
Browning! Since Chaucer was alive and hale,
No man hath walked along our roads with step
So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue
So varied in discourse. But warmer climes
Give brighter plumage, stronger wing: the breeze
Of Alpine heights thou playest with, borne on
Beyond Sorrento and Amalfi, where
The Siren waits thee, singing song for song

(1846)

ON TIMELY DEATH

Is it not better at an early hour
In its calm cell to rest the weary head,
While birds are singing and while blooms the bower,
Than sit the fire out and go starved to bed?

(1846)

TO AGE

Welcome, old friend! These many years
Have we lived door by door:
The Fates have laid aside their shears
Perhaps for some few more.

I was indocile at an age
When better boys were taught,
But thou at length hast made me sage,
If I am sage in aught.

Little I know from other men,
Too little they from me,
But thou hast pointed well the pen
That writes these lines to thee.

Thanks for expelling Fear and Hope,
One vile, the other vain;
One's scourge, the other's telescope,
I shall not see again:

Rather what lies before my feet
My notice shall engage —
He who hath braved Youth's dizzy heat
Dreads not the frost of Age.

(1853)

ON HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY

I strove with none; for none was worth my strife,
Nature I loved, and next to Nature, Art;
I warmed both hands before the fire of life,
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

(1853)

THOMAS CAMPBELL (1777–1844)

YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND

A NAVAL ODE

Ye mariners of England
That guard our native seas,
Whose flag has braved a thousand years
The battle and the breeze!
Your glorious standard launch again
To match another foe,
And sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow;
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

The spirits of your fathers
Shall start from every wave! —
For the deck it was their field of fame,
And Ocean was their grave:
Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell
Your manly hearts shall glow,
As ye sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow;
While the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

Britannia needs no bulwark,
No towers along the steep;
Her march is o'er the mountain waves,
Her home is on the deep.
With thunders from her native oak
She quells the floods below —
As they roar on the shore,
When the stormy winds do blow;
When the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn,
Till danger's troubled night depart
And the star of peace return.
Then, then, ye ocean-warriors!
Our song and feast shall flow
To the fame of your name,
When the storm has ceased to blow;
When the fiery fight is heard no more,
And the storm has ceased to blow.

(1801)

THOMAS MOORE (1779–1852)

OFT IN THE STILLY NIGHT

Oft, in the stilly night,
Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,
Fond Memory brings the light
Of other days around me;
The smiles, the tears,
Of boyhood's years,
The words of love then spoken;
The eyes that shone,
Now dimmed and gone,
The cheerful hearts now broken!
Thus, in the stilly night,
Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me.

When I remember all
The friends, so linked together,
I've seen around me fall,
Like leaves in wintry weather;
I feel like one
Who treads alone
Some banquet-hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled,
Whose garlands dead,
And all but he departed!
Thus, in the stilly night,
Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me.

(1818)

THE HARP THAT ONCE THROUGH TARA'S HALLS

The harp that once through Tara's halls
The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls
As if that soul were fled.
So sleeps the pride of former days,
So glory's thrill is o'er,
And hearts that once beat high for praise
Now feel that pulse no more!

No more to chiefs and ladies bright
The harp of Tara swells;
The chord alone that breaks at night
Its tale of ruin tells.
Thus Freedom now so seldom wakes,
The only throb she gives
Is when some heart indignant breaks,
To show that still she lives.

(1808)

LEIGH HUNT (1784–1859)

RONDEAU

Jenny kissed me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief, who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in:
Say I 'm weary, say I 'm sad,
Say that health and wealth have missed me,
Say I 'm growing old, but add,
Jenny kissed me.

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK (1785–1866)

THE MEN OF GOTHAM

Seamen three! what men be ye?
Gotham's three Wise Men we be.
Whither in your bowl so free?
To rake the moon from out the sea.
The bowl goes trim; the moon doth shine;
And our ballast is old wine:
And your ballast is old wine.

Who art thou, so fast adrift?
I am he they call Old Care.
Here on board we will thee lift.
No: I may not enter there.
Wherefore so? 'T is Jove's decree—
In a bowl Care may not be:
In a bowl Care may not be
Fear ye not the waves that roll?
No: in charmed bowl we swim.
What the charm that floats the bowl?
Water may not pass the brim.
The bowl goes trim; the moon doth shine;
And our ballast is old wine:
And your ballast is old wine.

(1818)

THE WAR-SONG OF DINAS VAWR

The mountain sheep are sweeter,
But the valley sheep are fatter;
We therefore deemed it meeter
To carry off the latter.
We made an expedition;
We met an host and quelled it;
We forced a strong position
And killed the men who held it.

On Dyfed's richest valley,
Where herds of kine were browsing,
We made a mighty sally,
To furnish our carousing.
Fierce warriors rushed to meet us;
We met them, and o'erthrew them:
They struggled hard to beat us,
But we conquered them, and slew them.

As we drove our prize at leisure,
The king marched forth to catch us:
His rage surpassed all measure,
But his people could not match us.
He fled to his hall-pillars;
And, ere our force we led off,
Some sacked his house and cellars,
While others cut his head off.

We there, in strife bewildering,
Spilt blood enough to swim in:
We orphaned many children
And widowed many women.
The eagles and the ravens
We glutted with our foemen:
The heroes and the cravens,
The spearmen and the bowmen.

We brought away from battle,
And much their land bemoaned them,
Two thousand head of cattle
And the head of him who owned them:
Ednyfed, King of Dyfed,
His head was borne before us;
His wine and beasts supplied our feasts,
And his overthrow, our chorus.

(1829)

THE FRIAR'S SONG

Though I be now a gray, gray friar,
Yet I was once a hale young knight:
The cry of my dogs was the only choir
In which my spirit did take delight.
Little I recked of matin bell,
But drowned its toll with my clanging horn
And the only beads I loved to tell
Were the beads of dew on the spangled thorn.

Little I reck of matin bell,
But drown its toll with my clanging horn:
And the only beads I love to tell
Are the beads of dew on the spangled thorn.

An archer keen I was withal,
As ever did lean on greenwood tree;
And could make the fleetest roebuck fall,
A good three hundred yards from me.
Though changeful time, with hand severe,
Has made me now these joys forego,
Yet my heart bounds whene'er I hear
Yoicks! hark away! and tally ho!

Though changeful time, with hand severe,
Has made me now these joys forego,
Yet my heart bounds whene'er I hear
Yoicks! hark away! and tally ho!
(1822)

CHARLES WOLFE (1791–1823)

THE BURIAL OF SIR JOHN MOORE AT CORUNNA

Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
As his corse to the rampart we hurried;
Not a soldier discharged his farewell shot
O'er the grave where our hero we buried.

We buried him darkly at dead of night,
The sods with our bayonets turning;
By the struggling moonbeam's misty light,
And the lantern dimly burning.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
Not in sheet nor in shroud we wound him,
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest
With his martial cloak around him.

Few and short were the prayers we said,
And we spoke not a word of sorrow;
But we steadfastly gazed on the face that was dead,
And we bitterly thought of the morrow.

We thought as we hollowed his narrow bed,
And smoothed down his lonely pillow,
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head,
And we far away on the billow!

Lightly they 'll talk of the spirit that 's gone,
And o'er his cold ashes upbraid him,—
But little he 'll reck, if they let him sleep on
In the grave where a Briton has laid him.

But half of our weary task was done
When the clock struck the hour for retiring;
And we heard the distant and random gun
That the foe was sullenly firing.

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
From the field of his fame fresh and gory;
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone—
But we left him alone with his glory.
(1817)

JOHN KEBLE (1792–1866)

UNITED STATES

Tyre of the *farther* West! be thou too warned,
Whose eagle wings thine own green world o'erspread,
Touching two Oceans: wherefore hast thou scorned
Thy fathers' God, O proud and full of bread?
Why lies the Cross unhonored on thy ground
While in mid air thy stars and arrows flaunt?
That sheaf of darts, will it not fall unbound,
Except, disrobed of thy vain earthly vaunt,
Thou bring it to be blessed where Saints and Angels haunt?

The holy seed, by Heaven's peculiar grace,
Is rooted here and there in thy dark woods;

But many a rank weed round it grows apace,
And Mammon builds beside thy mighty floods,
O'ertopping Nature, braving Nature's God;
O while thou yet hast room, fair fruitful land,
Ere war and want have stained thy virgin sod,
Mark thee a place on high, a glorious stand,
Whence Truth her sign may make o'er forest, lake, and strand.

Eastward, this hour, perchance thou turn'st thine ear,
Listening if haply with the surging sea,
Blend sounds of Ruin from a land once dear
To thee and Heaven. O trying hour for thee!
Tyre mocked when Salem fell; where now is Tyre?
Heaven was against her. Nations thick as waves,
Burst o'er her walls, to Ocean doomed and fire:
And now the tideless water idly laves
Her towers, and lone sands heap her crownèd merchants' graves.

(1836)

THOMAS HOOD (1798–1845)

FAIR INES

O saw ye not fair Ines?
She 's gone into the West,
To dazzle when the sun is down,
And rob the world of rest:
She took our daylight with her,
The smiles that we love best,
With morning blushes on her cheek,
And pearls upon her breast.

O turn again, fair Ines,
Before the fall of night,
For fear the Moon should shine alone,
And stars unrivaled bright;
And blessèd will the lover be
That walks beneath their light,
And breathes the love against thy cheek
I dare not even write!

Would I had been, fair Ines,
That gallant cavalier,
Who rode so gaily by thy side,
And whispered thee so near!—
Were there no bonny dames at home
Or no true lovers here,
That he should cross the seas to win
The dearest of the dear?

I saw thee, lovely Ines,
Descend along the shore,
With bands of noble gentlemen,
And banners waved before;
And gentle youth and maidens gay,
And snowy plumes they wore;—
It would have been a beauteous dream,
—If it had been no more!

Alas, alas! fair Ines,
She went away with song,
With Music waiting on her steps,
And shoutings of the throng;
But some were sad and felt no mirth,
But only Music's wrong,
In sounds that sang Farewell, Farewell
To her you 've loved so long.

Farewell, farewell, fair Ines!
That vessel never bore
So fair a lady on its deck,
Nor danced so light before,—
Alas for pleasure on the sea,
And sorrow on the shore!
The smile that blest one lover's heart
Has broken many more!

(1827)

THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS

One more Unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Look at her garments
Clinging like cerements;
Whilst the wave constantly
Drips from her clothing;
Take her up instantly,
Loving, not loathing.

Touch her not scornfully;
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly;

Not of the stains of her,
All that remains of her
Now is pure womanly.

Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
Rash and undutiful:
Past all dishonor,
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers,
One of Eve's family—
Wipe those poor lips of hers
Oozing so clammily.

Loop up her tresses
Escaped from the comb,
Her fair auburn tresses;
Whilst wonderment guesses
Where was her home?

Who was her father?
Who was her mother?
Had she a sister?
Had she a brother?
Or was there a dearer one
Still, and a nearer one
Yet, than all other?

Alas! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun!
O, it was pitiful!
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none.

Sisterly, brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly
Feelings had changed:
Love, by harsh evidence,
Thrown from its eminence;
Even God's providence
Seeming estranged.

Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window to casement,
From garret to basement,
She stood with amazement,
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver;
But not the dark arch,
Or the black flowing river:
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurled—
Anywhere, anywhere
Out of the world!

In she plunged boldly—
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran—
Over the brink of it,
Picture it—think of it,
Dissolute Man!
Lave in it, drink of it,
Then, if you can!

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Ere her limbs frigidly
Stiffen too rigidly,
Decently, kindly,
Smooth and compose them;
And her eyes, close them,
Staring so blindly!

Dreadfully staring
Through muddy impurity,
As when with the daring
Last look of despairing
Fixed on futurity.

Perishing gloomily,
Spurred by contumely,
Cold inhumanity,
Burning insanity,
Into her rest—
Cross her hands humbly,
As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast!

Owning her weakness,
Her evil behaviour,
And leaving with meekness,
Her sins to her Saviour!

(1844)

THE SONG OF THE SHIRT

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the 'Song of the Shirt.'

'Work! work! work!
While the cock is crowing aloof!
And work — work — work,
Till the stars shine through the roof!
It's Oh! to be a slave
Along with the barbarous Turk,
Where woman has never a soul to save,
If this is Christian work!

'Work — work — work,
Till the brain begins to swim;
Work — work — work,
Till the eyes are heavy and dim!
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
And sew them on in a dream!

'Oh, Men, with Sisters dear!
Oh, Men, with Mothers and Wives!
It is not linen you're wearing out
But human creatures' lives!
Stitch — stitch — stitch,
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
Sewing at once, with a double thread,
A Shroud as well as a Shirt.

'But why do I talk of Death?
That Phantom of grisly bone,
I hardly fear its terrible shape,
It seems so like my own —
It seems so like my own,
Because of the fasts I keep;
Oh, God! that bread should be so dear,
And flesh and blood so cheap!

'Work — work — work!
My labor never flags;
And what are its wages? A bed of straw,
A crust of bread — and rags.
That shattered roof — this naked floor —
A table — a broken chair —
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
For sometimes falling there!

'Work — work — work!
From weary chime to chime,
Work — work — work,
As prisoners work for crime!
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Till the heart is sick, and the brain benumbed,
As well as the weary hand.

'Work — work — work,
In the dull December light,
And work — work — work,
When the weather is warm and bright —
While underneath the eaves
The brooding swallows cling
As if to show me their sunny backs
And twit me with the spring.

'Oh! but to breathe the breath
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet —
With the sky above my head,
And the grass beneath my feet;
For only one short hour
To feel as I used to feel,
Before I knew the woes of want
And the walk that costs a meal.

'Oh! but for one short hour!
A respite however brief!
No blessèd leisure for Love or Hope,
But only time for Grief!
A little weeping would ease my heart,
But in their briny bed
My tears must stop, for every drop
Hinders needle and thread!'

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread —
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch,—
Would that its tone could reach the Rich! —
She sang this 'Song of the Shirt!'

(1843)

WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED (1802–1839)

THE BELLE OF THE BALL-ROOM

Years — years ago, ere yet my dreams
Had been of being wise or witty,—
Ere I had done with writing themes,
Or yawned o'er this infernal Chitty; —
Years — years ago,— while all my joy
Was in my fowling-piece and filly,—
In short, while I was yet a boy,
I fell in love with Laura Lily.

I saw her at the County Ball:
There, when the sounds of flute and fiddle
Gave signal sweet in that old hall
Of hands across and down the middle,
Hers was the subtlest spell by far

Of all that set young hearts romancing;
She was our queen, our rose, our star;
And then she danced — O Heaven, her dancing!

Dark was her hair, her hand was white;
Her voice was exquisitely tender;
Her eyes were full of liquid light;
I never saw a waist so slender!
Her every look, her every smile,
Shot right and left a score of arrows;
I thought 't was Venus from her isle,
And wondered where she 'd left her sparrows.

She talked,— of politics or prayers,—
Of Southey's prose or Wordsworth's sonnets,—
Of danglers — or of dancing bears,
Of battles — or the last new bonnets,
By candlelight, at twelve o'clock,
To me it mattered not a tittle;
If those bright lips had quoted Locke,
I might have thought they murmured Little.

Through sunny May, through sultry June,
I loved her with a love eternal;
I spoke her praises to the moon,
I wrote them to the Sunday Journal:
My mother laughed; I soon found out
That ancient ladies have no feeling:
My father frowned; but how should gout
See any happiness in kneeling?

She was the daughter of a Dean,
Rich, fat, and rather apoplectic;
She had one brother, just thirteen,
Whose color was extremely hectic;
Her grandmother for many a year
Had fed the parish with her bounty;
Her second cousin was a peer,
And Lord Lieutenant of the County.

But titles, and the three per cents,
And mortgages, and great relations,
And India bonds, and tithes, and rents,
Oh, what are they to love's sensations?
Black eyes, fair forehead, clustering locks —
Such wealth, such honors, Cupid chooses;
He cares as little for the Stocks,
As Baron Rothschild for the Muses.

She sketched; the vale, the wood, the beach,
Grew lovelier from her pencil's shading:
She botanized; I envied each
Young blossom in her boudoir fading:
She warbled Handel; it was grand;
She made the Catalani jealous:
She touched the organ; I could stand
For hours and hours to blow the bellows.

She kept an album, too, at home,
Well filled with all an album's glories;
Paintings of butterflies, and Rome,
Patterns for trimmings, Persian stories;
Soft songs to Julia's cockatoo,
Fierce odes to Famine and to Slaughter;
And autographs of Prince Leboo,
And recipes for elder-water.

And she was flattered, worshipped, bored;
Her steps were watched, her dress was noted,
Her poodle dog was quite adored,
Her sayings were extremely quoted;
She laughed, and every heart was glad,
As if the taxes were abolished;
She frowned, and every look was sad,
As if the Opera were demolished.

She smiled on many, just for fun,—
I knew that there was nothing in it;
I was the first — the only one
Her heart had thought of for a minute.—
I knew it, for she told me so,
In phrase which was divinely molded;
She wrote a charming hand,— and oh!
How sweetly all her notes were folded!

Our love was like most other loves; —
A little glow, a little shiver,
A rose-bud, and a pair of gloves,
And 'Fly not yet'— upon the river;
Some jealousy of some one's heir,
Some hopes of dying broken-hearted;
A miniature, a lock of hair,
The usual vows,— and then we parted.

We parted; months and years rolled by;
We met again four summers after:
Our parting was all sob and sigh;
Our meeting was all mirth and laughter:
For in my heart's most secret cell
There had been many other lodgers;
And she was not the ball-room's belle,
But only — Mrs. Something Rogers!

(1844)

A LETTER OF ADVICE

FROM MISS MEDORA TREVILIAN, AT PADUA, TO MISS ARAMINTA VAVASOUR, IN LONDON

You tell me you 're promised a lover,
My own Araminta, next week;

Why cannot my fancy discover
The hue of his coat and his cheek?
Alas! if he look like another,
A vicar, a banker, a beau,
Be deaf to your father and mother,
My own Araminta, say 'No!'

Miss Lane, at her Temple of Fashion,
Taught us both how to sing and to speak,
And we loved one another with passion,
Before we had been there a week:
You gave me a ring for a token;
I wear it wherever I go;
I gave you a chain,—is it broken?
My own Araminta, say 'No!'

O think of our favorite cottage,
And think of our dear Lalla Rookh!
How we shared with the milkmaids their pottage,
And drank of the stream from the brook;
How fondly our loving lips faltered,
'What further can grandeur bestow?'
My heart is the same;—is yours altered?
My own Araminta, say 'No!'

Remember the thrilling romances
We read on the bank in the glen;
Remember the suitors our fancies
Would picture for both of us then.
They wore the red cross on their shoulder,
They had vanquished and pardoned their foe—
Sweet friend, are you wiser or colder?
My own Araminta, say 'No!'

You know, when Lord Rigmarole's carriage,
Drove off with your Cousin Justine,
You wept, dearest girl, at the marriage,
And whispered 'How base she has been!'
You said you were sure it would kill you,
If ever your husband looked so;
And you will not apostatize,—will you?
My own Araminta, say 'No!'

When I heard I was going abroad, love,
I thought I was going to die;
We walked arm in arm to the road, love,
We looked arm in arm to the sky;
And I said 'When a foreign postilion
Has hurried me off to the Po,
Forget not Medora Trevilian:
My own Araminta, say "No"!'

We parted! but sympathy's fetters
Reach far over valley and hill;
I muse o'er your exquisite letters,
And feel that your heart is mine still;
And he who would share it with me, love,—
The richest of treasures below,—
If he's not what Orlando should be, love,
My own Araminta, say 'No!'

If he wears a top-boot in his wooing,
If he comes to you riding a cob,
If he talks of his baking or brewing,
If he puts up his feet on the hob,
If he ever drinks port after dinner,
If his brow or his breeding is low,
If he calls himself 'Thompson' or 'Skinner,'
My own Araminta, say 'No!'

If he studies the news in the papers
While you are preparing the tea,
If he talks of the damps or the vapors
While moonlight lies soft on the sea,
If he's sleepy while you are capricious,
If he has not a musical 'Oh!'
If he does not call Werther delicious,—
My own Araminta, say 'No!'

If he ever sets foot in the City
Among the stockbrokers and Jews,
If he has not a heart full of pity,
If he don't stand six feet in his shoes,
If his lips are not redder than roses,
If his hands are not whiter than snow,
If he has not the model of noses,—
My own Araminta, say 'No!'

If he speaks of a tax or a duty,
If he does not look grand on his knees,
If he's blind to a landscape of beauty,
Hills, valleys, rocks, waters, and trees,
If he dotes not on desolate towers,
If he likes not to hear the blast blow,
If he knows not the language of flowers,—
My own Araminta, say 'No!'

He must walk—like a god of old story
Come down from the home of his rest;
He must smile—like the sun in his glory
On the buds he loves ever the best;
And oh! from its ivory portal
Like music his soft speech must flow!—
If he speak, smile, or walk like a mortal,
My own Araminta, say 'No!'

Don't listen to tales of his bounty,
Don't hear what they say of his birth,
Don't look at his seat in the county,
Don't calculate what he is worth;
But give him a theme to write verse on,
And see if he turns out his toe;
If he's only an excellent person,—
My own Araminta, say 'No!'

(1844)

WILLIAM BARNES (1801–1886)

BLACKMWORE MAIDENS

The primrwose in the sheäde do blow,
The cowslip in the zun,
The thyme upon the down do grow,
The clote where streams do run;
An' where do pretty maidens grow
An' blow, but where the tow'r
Do rise among the bricken tuns
In Blackmwore by the Stour.

If you could zee their comely gaït,
An' pretty feäces' smiles,
A-trippèn on so light o' waïght,
An' steppèn off the stiles;
A-gwaïn to church, as bells do swing
An' ring 'ithin the tow'r,
You 'd own the pretty maïdens' pleäce
Is Blackmwore by the Stour.

If you vrom Wimborne took your road,
To Stower or Paladore,
An' all the farmers' housen show'd
Their daughters at the door;
You 'd cry to bachelors at hwome—
'Here come: 'ithin an hour
You 'll vind ten maïdens to your mind,
In Blackmwore by the Stour.'

An' if you look'd 'ithin their door,
To zee em in their pleäce,
A-doèn housework up avore
Their smilèn mother's feäce;
You'd cry— 'Why, if a man would wive
An' thrive, 'ithout a dow'r,
Then let en look en out a wife
In Blackmwore by the Stour.'

As I upon my road did pass
A school-house back in Maÿ,
There out upon the beäten grass
Wer maidens at their plaÿ;
An' as the pretty souls did tweil
An' smile, I cried, 'The flow'r
O' beauty, then, is still in bud
In Blackmwore by the Stour.'

(1844)

THE SURPRISE

As there I left the road in May,
And took my way along a ground,
I found a glade with girls at play,
By leafy boughs close-hemmed around,
And there, with stores of harmless joys,
They plied their tongues, in merry noise;
Though little did they seem to fear
So queer a stranger might be near;
Teeh-hee! Look here! Hah! ha! Look there!
And oh! so playsome, oh! so fair.

And one would dance as one would spring,
Or bob or bow with leering smiles,
And one would swing, or sit and sing,
Or sew a stitch or two at whiles,
And one skipped on with downcast face,
All heedless, to my very place,
And there, in fright, in one foot out,
Made one dead step and turned about.
Heeh, hee, oh! oh! ooh! oo!—Look there!
And oh! so playsome, oh, so fair.

Away they scampered all, full speed,
By boughs that swung along their track,
As rabbits out of wood at feed,
At sight of men all scamper back.
And one pulled on behind her heel,
A thread of cotton, off her reel,
And oh! to follow that white clue,
I felt I fain could scamper too.
Teeh, hee, run here. Eeh! ee! Look there!
And oh! so playsome, oh! so fair.

(1868)

THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES (1803–1849)

DREAM-PEDLARY

If there were dreams to sell,
What would you buy?
Some cost a passing bell;
Some a light sigh,
That shakes from Life's fresh crown
Only a rose-leaf down.
If there were dreams to sell,
Merry and sad to tell,
And the crier rang the bell,
What would you buy?

A cottage lone and still,
With bowers nigh,
Shadowy, my woes to still,
Until I die.
Such pearl from Life's fresh crown
Fain would I shake me down.
Were dreams to have at will,
This would best heal my ill,
This would I buy.

But there were dreams to sell
Ill didst thou buy;
Life is a dream, they tell,
Waking, to die.
Dreaming a dream to prize,
Is wishing ghosts to rise;
And if I had the spell
To call the buried well,
Which one would I?

If there are ghosts to raise,
What shall I call,
Out of hell's murky haze,
Heaven's blue pall?
Raise my loved long-lost boy,
To lead me to his joy.—
There are no ghosts to raise;
Out of death lead no ways;
Vain is the call.

Know'st thou not ghosts to sue,
No love thou hast.
Else lie, as I will do.
And breathe thy last.
So out of Life's fresh crown
Fall like a rose-leaf down.
Thus are the ghosts to woo;
Thus are all dreams made true,
Ever to last!

(1851)

BALLAD OF HUMAN LIFE

When we were girl and boy together,
We tossed about the flowers
And wreathed the blushing hours
Into a posy green and sweet.
I sought the youngest, best,
And never was at rest
Till I had laid them at thy fairy feet.
But the days of childhood they were fleet,
And the blooming sweet-briar-breathed weather,
When we were boy and girl together.

Then we were lad and lass together,
And sought the kiss of night
Before we felt aright,
Sitting and singing soft and sweet.
The dearest thought of heart
With thee 't was joy to part,
And the greater half was thine, as meet.
Still my eyelid 's dewy, my veins they beat
At the starry summer-evening weather,
When we were lad and lass together.

And we are man and wife together,
Although thy breast, once bold
With song, be closed and cold
Beneath flowers' roots and birds' light feet.
Yet sit I by thy tomb,
And dissipate the gloom
With songs of loving faith and sorrow sweet.
And fate and darkling grave kind dreams do cheat,
That, while fair life, young hope, despair and death are,
We 're boy and girl, and lass and lad, and man and wife together.

(1851)

From DEATH'S JEST BOOK

TO SEA, TO SEA!

To sea, to sea! The calm is o'er;
The wanton water leaps in sport,
And rattles down the pebbly shore;
The dolphin wheels, the sea-cows snort,
And unseen Mermaids' pearly song
Comes bubbling up, the weeds among.
Fling broad the sail, dip deep the oar:
To sea, to sea! the calm is o'er.

To sea, to sea! our wide-winged bark
Shall billowy cleave its sunny way,
And with its shadow, fleet and dark,
Break the caved Triton's azure day,
Like mighty eagle soaring light
O'er antelopes on Alpine height.
The anchor heaves, the ship swings free,
The sails swell full. To sea, to sea!

(1850)

DIRGE

If thou wilt ease thine heart
Of love and all its smart,
Then sleep, dear, sleep;
And not a sorrow
Hang any tear on your eye-lashes;
Lie still and deep,
Sad soul, until the sea-wave washes
The rim o' the sun to-morrow,
In eastern sky.

But wilt thou cure thine heart
Of love and all its smart,
Then die, dear, die;

'T is deeper, sweeter,
Than on a rose bank to lie dreaming
With folded eye;
And then alone, amid the beaming
Of love's stars, thou 'lt meet her
In eastern sky.

(1850)

SONG

Old Adam, the carrion crow,
The old crow of Cairo;
He sat in the shower, and let it flow
Under his tail and over his crest;
And through every feather
Leaked the wet weather;
And the bough swung under his nest;
For his beak it was heavy with marrow.
Is that the wind dying? O no;
It 's only two devils, that blow
Through a murderer's bones, to and fro,
In the ghosts' moonshine.

Ho! Eve, my gray carrion wife,
When we have supped on king's marrow,
Where shall we drink and make merry our life?
Our nest it is Queen Cleopatra's skull,
'T is cloven and cracked,
And battered and hacked,
But with tears of blue eyes it is full:
Let us drink then, my raven of Cairo.
Is that the wind dying? O no;
It 's only two devils, that blow
Through a murderer's bones, to and fro,
In the ghosts' moonshine.

(1850)

EDWARD FITZGERALD
(1809–1883)

From THE RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

Why, if the Soul, can fling the dust aside,
And naked on the air of Heaven ride,
Wer 't not a shame — wer 't not a shame for him
In this clay carcase crippled to abide?

'T is but a tent where takes his one-day's rest
A Sultán to the realm of Death addrest;
The Sultán rises, and the dark Ferrásh
Strikes, and prepares it for another guest.

And fear not lest existence closing your
Account, and mine, should know the like no more;
The Eternal Sáki from that bowl has poured
Millions of bubbles like us, and will pour.

When you and I behind the veil are past,
Oh, but the long long while the world shall last,
Which of our coming and departure heeds
As the Seven Seas should heed a pebble-cast.

A moment's halt — a momentary taste
Of Being from the well amid the waste —
And lo! — the phantom caravan has reached
The Nothing it set out from — Oh, make haste!

* * *

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

* * *

Yet ah, that Spring should vanish with the rose!
That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!
The nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah, whence, and whither flown again, who knows!

Would but the desert of the fountain yield
One glimpse — if dimly, yet indeed, revealed,
To which the fainting traveler might spring,
As springs the trampled herbage of the field!

Would but some winged Angel ere too late
Arrest the yet unfolded roll of fate,
And make the stern Recorder otherwise
Enregister, or quite obliterate!

Ah, Love! could you and I with him conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits — and then
Re-mold it nearer to the heart's desire!

* * *

(1859; 1872)

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING (1809–1861)

A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

What was he doing, the great god Pan,
  Down in the reeds by the river?
Spreading ruin and scattering ban,
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,
And breaking the golden lilies afloat
  With the dragon-fly on the river?

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,
  From the deep cool bed of the river,
The limpid water turbidly ran,
And the broken lilies a-dying lay,
And the dragon-fly had fled away,
  Ere he brought it out of the river.

High on the shore sat the great god Pan,
  While turbidly flowed the river,
And hacked and hewed as a great god can
With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,
Till there was not a sign of the leaf indeed
  To prove it fresh from the river.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan,
  (How tall it stood in the river!),
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,
Steadily from the outside ring,
And notched the poor dry empty thing
  In holes as he sat by the river.

'This is the way,' laughed the great god Pan,
  (Laughed while he sat by the river)
'The only way since gods began
To make sweet music, they could succeed.'
Then dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed,
  He blew in power by the river.

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan!
  Piercing sweet by the river!
Blinding sweet, O great god Pan!
The sun on the hill forgot to die,
And the lilies revived, and the dragon-fly
  Came back to dream on the river.

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan
  To laugh, as he sits by the river,
Making a poet out of a man:
The true gods sigh for the cost and pain—
For the reed which grows never more again
  As a reed with the reeds of the river.

(1862)

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE

I

I thought once how Theocritus had sung
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,
Who each one in a gracious hand appears
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young:
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,
I saw in gradual vision through my tears,
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair;
And a voice said in mastery while I strove,
'Guess now who holds thee?'—'Death!' I said. But there,
The silver answer rang: 'Not Death, but Love.'

V

I lift my heavy heart up solemnly,
As once Electra her sepulchral urn,
And looking in thine eyes, I overturn
The ashes at thy feet. Behold and see
What a great heap of grief lay hid in me,
And how the red wild sparkles dimly burn
Through the ashen grayness. If thy foot in scorn
Could tread them out to darkness utterly,
It might be well perhaps. But if instead
Thou wait beside me for the wind to blow
The gray dust up, . . . those laurels on thine head,
O my Belovèd, will not shield thee so,
That none of all the fires shall scorch and shred
The hair beneath. Stand farther off then! go.

VI

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand
Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore
Alone upon the threshold of my door
Of individual life, I shall command
The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand
Serenely in the sunshine as before,
Without the sense of that which I forbore—
Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land
Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine
With pulses that beat double. What I do
And what I dream include thee, as the wine
Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue

God for myself, he hears that name of thine,
And sees within my eyes the tears of two.

VII

The face of all the world is changed, I think,
Since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul
Move still, oh, still, beside me, as they stole
Betwixt me and the dreadful outer brink
Of obvious death, where I, who thought to sink,
Was caught up into love, and taught the whole
Of life in a new rhythm. The cup of dole
God gave for baptism, I am fain to drink,
And praise its sweetness, Sweet, with thee anear.
The names of country, heaven, are changed away
For where thou art or shalt be, there or here;
And this . . . this lute and song . . . loved yesterday,
(The singing angels know) are only dear
Because thy name moves right in what they say.

XIII

And wilt thou have me fashion into speech
The love I bear thee, finding words enough,
And hold the torch out, while the winds are rough,
Between our faces, to cast light on each? —
I drop it at thy feet. I cannot teach
My hand to hold my spirit so far off
From myself — me — that I should bring thee proof
In words, of love hid in me out of reach.
Nay, let the silence of my womanhood
Commend my woman-love to thy belief, —
Seeing that I stand unwon, however wooed,
And rend the garment of my life, in brief,
By a most dauntless, voiceless fortitude,
Lest one touch of this heart convey its grief.

XIV

If thou must love me, let it be for nought
Except for love's sake only. Do not say
'I love her for her smile — her look — her way
Of speaking gently, — for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day'—
For these things in themselves, Belovèd, may
Be changed, or change for thee, — and love, so wrought,
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry, —
A creature might forget to weep, who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!
But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou mayst love on, through love's eternity.

XX

Belovèd, my Belovèd, when I think
That thou wast in the world a year ago,
What time I sat alone here in the snow
And saw no footprint, heard the silence sink
No moment at thy voice, but, link by link,
Went counting all my chains as if that so
They never could fall off at any blow
Struck by thy possible hand, — why, thus I drink
Of life's great cup of wonder! Wonderful,
Never to feel thee thrill the day or night
With personal act or speech, — nor ever cull
Some prescience of thee with the blossoms white
Thou sawest growing! Atheists are as dull,
Who cannot guess God's presence out of sight.

XXXV

If I leave all for thee, wilt thou exchange
And be all to me? Shall I never miss
Home-talk and blessing and the common kiss
That comes to each in turn, nor count it strange,
When I look up, to drop on a new range
Of walls and floors, another home than this?
Nay, wilt thou fill that place by me which is
Filled by dead eyes too tender to know change?
That's hardest. If to conquer love, has tried,
To conquer grief, tries more, as all things prove;
For grief indeed is love and grief beside.
Alas, I have grieved so I am hard to love.
Yet love me — wilt thou? Open thine heart wide,
And fold within the wet wings of thy dove.

XLIII

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,— I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life! — and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

(1850)

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811–1863)

AT THE CHURCH GATE

Although I enter not,
Yet round about the spot
  Ofttimes I hover;
And near the sacred gate,
With longing eyes I wait,
  Expectant of her.

The minster bell tolls out
Above the city's rout,
  And noise and humming;
They 've hush'd the minster bell:
The organ 'gins to swell;
  She 's coming, she 's coming!

My lady comes at last,
Timid and stepping fast
  And hastening thither,
With modest eyes downcast;
She comes — she 's here, she 's past!
  May heaven go with her!

Kneel undisturbed, fair saint!
Pour out your praise or plaint
  Meekly and duly;
I will not enter there,
To sully your pure prayer
  With thoughts unruly.

But suffer me to pace
Round the forbidden place,
  Lingering a minute,
Like outcast spirits, who wait,
And see, through heaven's gate,
  Angels within it.

(1849–50)

THE END OF THE PLAY

The play is done — the curtain drops,
  Slow falling to the prompter's bell;
A moment yet the actor stops,
  And looks around, to say farewell.
It is an irksome word and task;
  And when he 's laughed and said his say,
He shows, as he removes the mask,
  A face that 's anything but gay.

One word, ere yet the evening ends:
  Let 's close it with a parting rhyme,
And pledge a hand to all young friends,
  As fits the merry Christmas time;
On life's wide scene you, too, have parts,
  That fate ere long shall bid you play;
Good-night! — with honest gentle hearts
  A kindly greeting go alway!

Good-night! — I 'd say the griefs, the joys,
  Just hinted in this mimic page,
The triumphs and defeats of boys,
  Are but repeated in our age;
I 'd say your woes were not less keen,
  Your hopes more vain, than those of men,
Your pangs or pleasures of fifteen
  At forty-five played o'er again.

I 'd say we suffer and we strive
  Not less nor more as men than boys,
With grizzled beards at forty-five,
  As erst at twelve in corduroys,
And if, in time of sacred youth,
  We learned at home to love and pray,
Pray heaven that early love and truth
  May never wholly pass away.

And in the world, as in the school,
  I 'd say how fate may change and shift,
The prize be sometimes with the fool,
  The race not always to the swift;
The strong may yield, the good may fall,
  The great man be a vulgar clown,
The knave be lifted over all,
  The kind cast pitilessly down.

Who knows the inscrutable design?
  Blessed be he who took and gave!
Why should your mother, Charles, not mine,
  Be weeping at her darling's grave?

We bow to heaven that willed it so,
That darkly rules the fate of all,
That sends the respite or the blow,
That 's free to give or to recall.

This crowns his feast with wine and wit —
Who brought him to that mirth and state?
His betters, see, below him sit,
Or hunger hopeless at the gate.
Who bade the mud from Dives' wheel
To spurn the rags of Lazarus?
Come, brother, in that dust we 'll kneel,
Confessing heaven that ruled it thus.

So each shall mourn, in life's advance,
Dear hopes, dear friends, untimely killed,
Shall grieve for many a forfeit chance,
And longing passion unfulfilled.
Amen! — whatever fate be sent,
Pray God the heart may kindly glow,
Although the head with cares be bent,
And whitened with the winter snow.

Come wealth or want, come good or ill,
Let young and old accept their part,
And bow before the awful will,
And bear it with an honest heart.
Who misses or who wins the prize —
Go, lose or conquer as you can;
But if you fail, or if you rise,
Be each, pray God, a gentleman.

A gentleman, or old or young!
(Bear kindly with my humble lays;)
The sacred chorus first was sung
Upon the first of Christmas days;
The shepherds heard it overhead —
The joyful angels raised it then:
Glory to heaven on high, it said,
And peace on earth to gentle men!

My song, save this, is little worth;
I lay the weary pen aside,
And wish you health, and love, and mirth,
As fits the solemn Christmas-tide.
As fits the holy Christmas birth,
Be this, good friends, our carol still:
Be peace on earth, be peace on earth,
To men of gentle will.

(1848)

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH
(1819–1861)

QUA CURSUM VENTUS

As ships, becalmed at eve, that lay
With canvas drooping, side by side,
Two towers of sail at dawn of day
Are scarce long leagues apart descried:

When fell the night, upsprung the breeze,
And all the darkling hours they plied,
Nor dreamt but each the self-same seas
By each was cleaving, side by side;

E'en so, but why the tale reveal
Of those, whom year by year, unchanged,
Brief absence joined anew to feel,
Astounded, soul from soul estranged?

At dead of night their sails were filled,
And onward each rejoicing steered —
Ah, neither blame, for neither willed,
Or wist, what first with dawn appeared!

To veer, how vain! On, onward strain,
Brave barks! In light, in darkness too,
Through winds and tides one compass guides —
To that, and your own selves, be true.

But O blithe breeze; and O great seas,
Though ne'er, that earliest parting past,
On your wide plain they join again,
Together lead them home at last.

One port, methought, alike they sought,
One purpose hold where'er they fare,—
O bounding breeze, O rushing seas!
At last, at last, unite them there!

(1849)

WHITHER DEPART THE BRAVE

Rome is fallen, I hear, the gallant Medici taken,
Noble Manara slain, and Garibaldi has lost *il Moro;* —
Rome is fallen; and fallen, or falling, heroical Venice.
I, meanwhile, for the loss of a single small chit of a girl, sit
Moping and mourning here,— for her, and myself much smaller.
Whither depart the souls of the brave that die in the battle,
Die in the lost, lost fight, for the cause that perishes with them?
Are they upborne from the field on the slumberous pinions of angels
Unto a far-off home, where the weary rest from their labor,
And the deep wounds are healed, and the bitter and burning moisture
Wiped from the generous eyes? or do they linger, unhappy,

Pining, and haunting the grave of their bygone hope and endeavor?
All declamation, alas! though I talk, I care not for Rome nor
Italy; feebly and faintly, and but with the lips, can lament the
Wreck of the Lombard youth, and the victory of the oppressor.
Whither depart the brave! — God knows; I certainly do not.

(1858)

WHERE LIES THE LAND

Where lies the land to which the ship would go?
Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know.
And where the land she travels from? Away,
Far, far behind, is all that they can say.

On sunny noons upon the deck's smooth face,
Linked arm in arm, how pleasant here to pace;
Or, o'er the stern reclining, watch below
The foaming wake far widening as we go.

On stormy nights when wild northwesters rave,
How proud a thing to fight with wind and wave!
The dripping sailor on the reeling mast
Exults to bear, and scorns to wish it past.

Where lies the land to which the ship would go?
Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know.
And where the land she travels from? Away,
Far, far behind, is all that they can say.

(1862)

AH! YET CONSIDER IT AGAIN!

'Old things need not be therefore true,'
O brother men, nor yet the new;
Ah! still awhile the old thought retain,
And yet consider it again!

The souls of now two thousand years
Have laid up here their toils and fears,
And all the earnings of their pain,—
Ah, yet consider it again!

We! what do we see? each a space
Of some few yards before his face;
Does that the whole wide plan explain?
Ah, yet consider it again!

Alas! the great world goes its way,
And takes its truth from each new day;
They do not quit, nor can retain,
Far less consider it again.

(1862)

IN THE DEPTHS

It is not sweet content, be sure,
That moves the nobler Muse to song,
Yet when could truth come whole and pure
From hearts that inly writhe with wrong?

'T is not the calm and peaceful breast
That sees or reads the problem true;
They only know, on whom 't has prest
Too hard to hope to solve it too.

Our ills are worse than at their ease
These blameless happy souls suspect,
They only study the disease,
Alas, who live not to detect.

(1862)

THE LATEST DECALOGUE

Thou shalt have one God only; who
Would be at the expense of two?
No graven images may be
Worshipped, except the currency:
Swear not at all; for, for thy curse
Thine enemy is none the worse:
At church on Sunday to attend
Will serve to keep the world thy friend:
Honor thy parents: that is, all
From whom advancement may befall;
Thou shalt not kill; but need'st not strive
Officiously to keep alive:
Do not adultery commit;
Advantage rarely comes of it:
Thou shalt not steal; an empty feat,
When it 's so lucrative to cheat:
Bear not false witness; let the lie
Have time on its own wings to fly:
Thou shalt not covet, but tradition
Approves all forms of competition.

(1862)

SAY NOT THE STRUGGLE NOUGHT AVAILETH

Say not the struggle nought availeth,
The labor and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright.

(1862)

LIFE IS STRUGGLE

To wear out heart, and nerves, and brain,
And give oneself a world of pain;
Be eager, angry, fierce, and hot,
Imperious, supple — God knows what,
For what 's all one to have or not;
O false, unwise, absurd, and vain!
For 't is not joy, it is not gain,
It is not in itself a bliss,
Only it is precisely this
That keeps us all alive.

To say we truly feel the pain,
And quite are sinking with the strain; —
Entirely, simply, undeceived,
Believe, and say we ne'er believed
The object, e'en were it achieved,
A thing we e'er had cared to keep;
With heart and soul to hold it cheap,
And then to go and try it again;
O false, unwise, absurd, and vain!
O, 't is not joy, and 't is not bliss,
Only it is precisely this
That keeps us still alive.

(1869)

FREDERICK LOCKER-LAMPSON
(1821–1895)

TO MY GRANDMOTHER

Suggested by a picture by Mr. Romney

This relative of mine,
Was she seventy-and nine
When she died?
By the canvas may be seen
How she looked at seventeen,
As a bride.

Beneath a summer tree
Her maiden reverie
Has a charm;
Her ringlets are in taste;
What an arm! and what a waist
For an arm!

With her bridal-wreath, bouquet,
Lace farthingale, and gay
Falbala,—
If Romney's touch be true,
What a lucky dog were you,
Grandpapa!

Her lips are sweet as love;
They are parting! Do they move?
Are they dumb?
Her eyes are blue, and beam
Beseechingly, and seem
To say, 'Come!'

What funny fancy slips
From atween these cherry lips?
Whisper me,
Fair Sorceress in paint,
What canon says I may n't
Marry thee?

That good-for-nothing Time
Has a confidence sublime!
When I first
Saw this Lady, in my youth,
Her winters had, forsooth,
Done their worst.

Her locks, as white as snow,
Once shamed the swarthy crow;
By-and-by
That fowl's avenging sprite
Set his cruel foot for spite
Near her eye.

Her rounded form was lean,
And her silk was bombazine;
Well I wot
With her needles would she sit,
And for hours would she knit,—
Would she not?

Ah, perishable clay!
Her charms had dropt away
One by one;
But if she heaved a sigh
With a burthen, it was, 'Thy
Will be done.'

In travail, as in tears,
With the fardel of her years
Overprest,

In mercy she was borne
Where the weary and the worn
Are at rest.

Oh, if you now are there,
And sweet as once you were,
Grandmamma,
This nether world agrees
You 'll all the better please
Grandpapa.

(1862)

MY MISTRESS'S BOOTS

She has dancing eyes and ruby lips,
Delightful boots — and away she skips.

They nearly strike me dumb,—
I tremble when they come
Pit-a-pat:
This palpitation means
These Boots are Geraldine's —
Think of that!

O, where did hunter win
So delicate a skin
For her feet?
You lucky little kid,
You perished, so you did,
For my Sweet.

The faery stitching gleams
On the sides, and in the seams,
And reveals
That the Pixies were the wags
Who tipt these funny tags,
And these heels.

What soles to charm an elf! —
Had Crusoe, sick of self,
Chanced to view
One printed near the tide,
O, how hard he would have tried
For the two!

For Gerry 's debonair,
And innocent and fair
As a rose;
She 's an Angel in a frock,—
She 's an Angel with a clock
To her hose!

The simpletons who squeeze
Their pretty toes to please
Mandarins,
Would positively flinch
From venturing to pinch
Geraldine's!

Cinderella's left and rights
To Geraldine's were frights:
And I trow
The Damsel, deftly shod,
Has dutifully trod
Until now.

Come, Gerry, since it suits
Such a pretty Puss (in Boots)
These to don,
Set your dainty hand a while
On my shoulder, Dear, and I 'll
Put them on.

(1868)

COVENTRY PATMORE
(1823–1896)

THE SPIRIT'S EPOCHS

Not in the crises of events,
Of compassed hopes, or fears fulfilled,
Or acts of gravest consequence,
Are life's delight and depth revealed.
The day of days was not the day;
That went before, or was postponed;
The night Death took our lamp away
Was not the night on which we groaned.
I drew my bride, beneath the moon,
Across my threshold; happy hour!
But, ah, the walk that afternoon
We saw the water-flags in flower!

(1862)

THE MARRIED LOVER

Why, having won her, do I woo?
Because her spirit's vestal grace
Provokes me always to pursue,
But, spirit-like, eludes embrace;
Because her womanhood is such
That, as on court-days subjects kiss
The Queen's hand, yet so near a touch
Affirms no mean familiarness:
Nay, rather marks more fair the height
Which can with safety so neglect
To dread, as lower ladies might,
That grace could meet with disrespect;
Thus she with happy favor feeds
Allegiance from a love so high
That thence no false conceit proceeds
Of difference bridged, or state put by,
Because although in act and word
As lowly as a wife can be

Her manners, when they call me lord,
Remind me 't is by courtesy;
Not with her least consent of will,
Which would my proud affection hurt,
But by the noble style that still
Imputes an unattained desert;
Because her gay and lofty brows,
When all is won which hope can ask,
Reflect a light of hopeless snows
That bright in virgin ether bask;
Because, though free of the outer court
I am, this Temple keeps its shrine
Sacred to Heaven; because in short,
She 's not and never can be mine.

(1862)

IF I WERE DEAD

'If I were dead, you 'd sometimes say, Poor Child!'
The dear lips quivered as they spake,
And the tears brake
From eyes which, not to grieve me, brightly smiled.
Poor Child, poor Child!
I seem to hear your laugh, your talk, your song.
It is not true that Love will do no wrong.
Poor Child!
And did you think, when you so cried and smiled,
How I, in lonely nights, should lie awake,
And of those words your full avengers make?
Poor Child, poor Child!
And now unless it be
That sweet amends thrice told are come to thee,
O God, have thou *no* mercy upon me!
Poor Child!

(1877)

SIDNEY DOBELL (1824–1874)

AMERICA

Men say, Columbia, we shall hear thy guns.
But in what tongue shall be thy battle-cry?
Not that our sires did love in years gone by,
When all the Pilgrim Fathers were little sons
In merrie homes of Englaunde? Back, and see
Thy satcheled ancestor! Behold, he runs
To mine, and, clasped, they tread the equal lea
To the same village-school, where side by side
They spell 'our Father.' Hard by, the twin-pride
Of that gray hall whose ancient oriel gleams
Through yon baronial pines, with looks of light
Our sister-mothers sit beneath one tree.
Meanwhile our Shakspere wanders past and dreams
His Helena and Hermia. Shall we fight?

Nor force nor fraud shall sunder us! O ye
Who north or south, on east or western land,
Native to noble sounds, say truth for truth,
Freedom for freedom, love for love, and God
For God; O ye who in eternal youth
Speak with a living and creative flood
This universal English, and do stand
Its breathing book; live worthy of that grand,
Heroic utterance — parted, yet a whole,
Far, yet unsevered,— children brave and free
Of the great Mother-tongue, and ye shall be
Lords of an Empire wide as Shakspere's soul,
Sublime as Milton's immemorial theme,
And rich as Chaucer's speech, and fair as Spenser's dream.

(1855)

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI (1830–1894)

SONG

When I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
Nor shady cypress-tree:
Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet;
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
I shall not feel the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale
Sing on, as if in pain:
And dreaming through the twilight

That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
And haply may forget.

(1862)

REMEMBER

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more, day by day,
You tell me of our future that you planned:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

(1862)

ABNEGATION

If there be any one can take my place
And make you happy whom I grieve to grieve,
Think not that I can grudge it, but believe
I do commend you to that nobler grace,
That readier wit than mine, that sweeter face;
Yea, since your riches make me rich, conceive
I too am crowned, while bridal crowns I weave,
And thread the bridal dance with jocund pace.
For if I did not love you, it might be
That I should grudge you some one dear delight;
But since the heart is yours that was mine own,
Your pleasure is my pleasure, right my right,
Your honorable freedom makes me free,
And you companioned I am not alone.

(1881)

TRUST

If I could trust mine own self with your fate,
Shall I not rather trust it in God's hand?
Without whose will one lily doth not stand,
Nor sparrow fall at his appointed date;
Who numbereth the innumerable sand,
Who weighs the wind and water with a weight,
To whom the world is neither small nor great,
Whose knowledge foreknew every plan we planned.
Searching my heart for all that touches you,
I find there only love and love's good-will
Helpless to help and impotent to do,
Of understanding dull, of sight most dim;
And therefore I commend you back to him
Whose love your love's capacity can fill.

(1881)

UP-HILL

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?
A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
Of labor you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
Yea, beds for all who come.

(1862)

CHARLES STUART CALVERLEY (1831–1884)

COMPANIONS

A TALE OF A GRANDFATHER

I know not of what we pondered
Or made pretty pretence to talk,
As, her hand within mine, we wandered
Toward the pool by the lime-tree walk,

While the dew fell in showers from the passion flowers
And the blush-rose bent on her stalk.

I cannot recall her figure:
Was it regal as Juno's own?
Or only a trifle bigger
Than the elves who surround the throne
Of the Faëry Queen, and are seen, I ween,
By mortals in dreams alone?

What her eyes were like I know not:
Perhaps they were blurred with tears;
And perhaps in yon skies there glow not
(On the contrary) clearer spheres.
No! as to her eyes I am just as wise
As you or the cat, my dears.

Her teeth, I presume, were 'pearly:'
But which was she, brunette or blonde?
Her hair, was it quaintly curly,
Or as straight as a beadle's wand?
That I failed to remark: it was rather dark
And shadowy round the pond.

Then the hand that reposed so snugly
In mine,— was it plump or spare?
Was the countenance fair or ugly?
Nay, children, you have me there!
My eyes were p'haps blurred; and besides I'd heard
That it's horribly rude to stare.

And I,— was I brusque and surly?
Or oppressively bland and fond?
Was I partial to rising early?
Or why did we twain abscond,
When nobody knew, from the public view
To prowl by a misty pond?

What passed, what was felt or spoken,—
Whether anything passed at all,—
And whether the heart was broken
That beat under that shelt'ring shawl,—
(If shawl she had on, which I doubt),— has gone,
Yes, gone from me past recall.

Was I haply the lady's suitor?
Or her uncle? I can't make out;
Ask your governess, dears, or tutor.
For myself, I'm in hopeless doubt
As to why we were there, who on earth we were,
And what this is all about.

(1872)

AUSTIN DOBSON (1840–)

A DEAD LETTER

I

I drew it from its china tomb;—
It came out feebly scented
With some thin ghost of past perfume
That dust and days had lent it.

An old, old letter,— folded still!
To read with due composure,
I sought the sun-lit window-sill,
Above the gray enclosure,

That glimmering in the sultry haze,
Faint flowered, dimly shaded,
Slumbered like Goldsmith's Madam Blaize,
Bedizened and brocaded.

A queer old place! You'd surely say
Some tea-board garden-maker
Had planned it in Dutch William's day
To please some florist Quaker,

So trim it was. The yew-trees still,
With pious care perverted,
Grew in the same grim shapes; and still
The lipless dolphin spurted;

Still in his wonted state abode
The broken-nosed Apollo;
And still the cypress-arbor showed
The same umbrageous hollow.

Only,— as fresh young Beauty gleams
From coffee-colored laces,—
So peeped from its old-fashioned dreams
The fresher modern traces;

For idle mallet, hoop, and ball
Upon the lawn were lying;
A magazine, a tumbled shawl,
Round which the swifts were flying;

And, tossed beside the Guelder rose,
A heap of rainbow knitting,
Where, blinking in her pleased repose,
A Persian cat was sitting.

'A place to love in,— live,— for aye,
If we too, like Tithonus,
Could find some God to stretch the gray
Scant life the Fates have thrown us;

'But now by steam we run our race,
With buttoned heart and pocket;

Our Love's a gilded, surplus grace,—
Just like an empty locket!

"The time is out of joint." Who will,
May strive to make it better;
For me, this warm old window-sill,
And this old dusty letter.'

II

'Dear *John* (the letter ran), it can't, can't be,
For Father's gone to *Chorley Fair* with *Sam*,
And Mother's storing Apples,—*Prue* and *Me*
Up to our Elbows making Damson Jam:
But we shall meet before a Week is gone,—
"'T is a long Lane that has no turning," *John!*

'Only till Sunday next, and then you'll wait
Behind the White-Thorn, by the broken Stile—
We can go round and catch them at the Gate,
All to Ourselves, for nearly one long Mile;
Dear *Prue* won't look, and Father he'll go on,
And *Sam's* two Eyes are all for *Cissy*, *John!*

'*John*, she's so smart,—with every ribbon new,
Flame-colored Sack, and Crimson Padesoy;
As proud as proud; and has the Vapors too,
Just like My Lady;—calls poor *Sam* a Boy,
And vows no Sweet-heart's worth the Thinking-on
Till he's past Thirty . . . I know better, *John!*

'My Dear, I don't think that I thought of much
Before we knew each other, I and you;
And now, why, *John*, your least, least Finger-touch,
Gives me enough to think a Summer through.
See, for I send you Something! There, 't is gone!
Look in this corner,—mind you find it, *John!*'

III

This was the matter of the note,—
A long-forgot deposit,
Dropped in an Indian dragon's throat,
Deep in a fragrant closet,

Piled with a dapper Dresden world,—
Beaux, beauties, prayers, and poses,—
Bonzes with squat legs undercurled,
And great jars filled with roses.

Ah, heart that wrote! Ah, lips that kissed!
You had no thought or presage
Into what keeping you dismissed
Your simple old-world message!

A reverent one. Though we to-day
Distrust beliefs and powers,
The artless, ageless things you say
Are fresh as May's own flowers,

Starring some pure primeval spring,
Ere Gold had grown despotic,—
Ere Life was yet a selfish thing,
Or Love a mere exotic!

I need not search too much to find
Whose lot it was to send it,
That feel upon me yet the kind,
Soft hand of her who penned it;

And see, through twoscore years of smoke,
In by-gone, quaint apparel,
Shine from yon time-black Norway oak
The face of Patience Caryl,—

The pale, smooth forehead, silver-tressed;
The gray gown, primly flowered;
The spotless, stately coif whose crest
Like Hector's horse-plume towered;

And still the sweet half-solemn look
Where some past thought was clinging,
As when one shuts a serious book
To hear the thrushes singing.

I kneel to you! Of those you were,
Whose kind old hearts grow mellow,—
Whose fair old faces grow more fair
As Point and Flanders yellow;

Whom some old store of garnered grief,
Their placid temples shading,
Crowns like a wreath of autumn leaf
With tender tints of fading.

Peace to your soul! You died unwed—
Despite this loving letter.
And what of John? The less that's said
Of John, I think, the better.

(1883)

JAMES THOMSON (1834–1882)

From THE CITY OF DREADFUL NIGHT

MELENCOLIA

Anear the center of that northern crest
Stands out a level upland bleak and bare,
From which the city east and south and west
Sinks gently in long waves; and thronèd there
An Image sits, stupendous, superhuman,
The bronze colossus of a wingèd Woman,
Upon a graded granite base foursquare.

Low-seated she leans forward massively,
With cheek on clenched left hand, the forearm's might
Erect, its elbow on her rounded knee;
Across a clasped book in her lap the right
Upholds a pair of compasses; she gazes
With full set eyes, but wandering in thick mazes
Of somber thought beholds no outward sight.

Words cannot picture her; but all men know
That solemn sketch the pure sad artist wrought
Three centuries and three score years ago,
With fantasies of his peculiar thought:
The instruments of carpentry and science
Scattered about her feet, in strange alliance
With the keen wolf-hound sleeping undistraught;

Scales, hour-glass, bell, and magic-square above;
The grave and solid infant perched beside,
With open winglets that might bear a dove,
Intent upon its tablets, heavy-eyed;
Her folded wings as of a mighty eagle
But all too impotent to lift the regal
Robustness of her earth-born strength and pride;

And with those wings, and that light wreath which seems
To mock her grand head and the knotted frown
Of forehead charged with baleful thoughts and dreams,
The household bunch of keys, the housewife's gown
Voluminous, indented, and yet rigid
As if a shell of burnished metal frigid,
The feet thick-shod to tread all weakness down;

The comet hanging o'er the waste dark seas,
The massy rainbow curved in front of it
Beyond the village with the masts and trees;
The snaky imp, dog-headed, from the Pit,
Bearing upon its batlike leathern pinions
Her name unfolded in the sun's dominions,
The 'MELENCOLIA' that transcends all wit.

Thus has the artist copied her, and thus
Surrounded to expound her form sublime,
Her fate heroic and calamitous;
Fronting the dreadful mysteries of Time,
Unvanquished in defeat and desolation,
Undaunted in the hopeless conflagration
Of the day setting on her baffled prime.

Baffled and beaten back she works on still,
Weary and sick of soul she works the more,
Sustained by her indomitable will:
The hands shall fashion and the brain shall pore,
And all her sorrow shall be turned to labor,
Till Death the friend-foe piercing with his saber
That mighty heart of hearts ends bitter war.

But as if blacker night could dawn on night,
With tenfold gloom on moonless night unstarred,
A sense more tragic than defeat and blight,
More desperate than strife with hope debarred,
More fatal than the adamantine Never
Encompassing her passionate endeavor,
Dawns glooming in her tenebrous regard:

The sense that every struggle brings defeat
Because Fate holds no prize to crown success;
That all the oracles are dumb or cheat
Because they have no secret to express;

That none can pierce the vast black veil uncertain
Because there is no light beyond the curtain;
That all is vanity and nothingness.

Titanic from her high throne in the north,
That City's somber Patroness and Queen,
In bronze sublimity she gazes forth
Over her Capital of teen and threne,
Over the river with its isles and bridges,
The marsh and moorland, to the stern rock-ridges,
Confronting them with a coeval mien.

The moving moon and stars from east to west
Circle before her in the sea of air;
Shadows and gleams glide round her solemn rest.
Her subjects often gaze up to her there:
The strong to drink new strength of iron endurance,
The weak new terrors; all, renewed assurance
And confirmation of the old despair.

(1874)

ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY
(1844–1881)

HAS SUMMER COME WITHOUT THE ROSE?

Has summer come without the rose,
Or left the bird behind?
Is the blue changed above thee,
O world! or am I blind?
Will you change every flower that grows,
Or only change this spot,
Where she who said, I love thee,
Now says, I love thee not?

The skies seemed true above thee,
The rose true on the tree;
The bird seemed true the summer through,
But all proved false to me.
World, is there one good thing in you,
Life, love, or death — or what?
Since lips that sang, I love thee,
Have said, I love thee not?

I think the sun's kiss will scarce fall
Into one flower's gold cup;
I think the bird will miss me,
And give the summer up.
O sweet place, desolate in tall
Wild grass, have you forgot
How her lips loved to kiss me,
Now that they kiss me not,

Be false or fair above me;
Come back with any face,
Summer! — do I care what you do?
You cannot change one place,—
The grass, the leaves, the earth, the dew,
The grave I make the spot,—
Here, where she used to love me,
Here, where she loves me not.

(1874)

ODE

We are the music makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams; —
World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams:
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory:
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample a kingdom down.

We, in the ages lying
In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
And Babel itself in our mirth;
And o'erthrew them with prophesying
To the old of the new world's worth;
For each age is a dream that is dying,
Or one that is coming to birth.

* * *

(1874)

THOMAS DE QUINCEY (1785–1859)

De Quincey's life was ill-regulated, almost from his infancy, in its material conditions. His education was interrupted by changes from one school to another, and at seventeen he ran away from the grammar school of his native city, Manchester, as he himself describes in the first of our extracts from the 'Confessions.' He made his way through Wales to London, where he wandered about in the streets and mixed with the lowest classes of society. After a year of this adventurous life he became an undergraduate at Oxford, but he gave little attention to the prescribed studies, and left without taking a degree. He spent a great deal of time on German, of which he had already learnt something from a chance meeting with a tourist during his wanderings in Wales, and he obtained a good knowledge of Kant and other philosophical writers. He wrote, years afterwards: 'Without breach of truth or modesty I may affirm that my life has been, on the whole, the life of a philosopher: from my birth I was made an intellectual creature; and intellectual in the highest sense my pursuits and pleasures have been, even from my school-boy days.' In 1807 he paid a visit to Coleridge and escorted Mrs. Coleridge and her children to the Lake District, where he met Southey and Wordsworth, and settled down for some years, marrying the daughter of a Westmoreland farmer. In 1821 he removed to London and began his literary career by contributing the *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* to the *London Magazine*. His writings consist almost entirely of essays and reviews, written for various periodicals, and covering a wide range of subjects; many of them are on German literature, which at that time was interesting the British public. The latter part of his life was spent mainly in and about Edinburgh, where his daughter kept house for him. She says: 'He was not a reassuring man for nervous people to live with, as those nights were exceptions on which he did not set something on fire, the commonest incident being for someone to look up from book or work to say casually: "Papa, your hair is on fire," of which a calm, "Is it, my love?" and a hand rubbing out of the blaze was all the notice taken.' His rooms were crowded with books and papers until they became uninhabitable and he moved elsewhere, leaving the accumulated store to the mercy of the landlady. He was incapable of managing money matters, and was often in prison for debt. He would ask for the loan of a small sum, imagining himself absolutely penniless when he had a £50 note in his pocket. His dress and his personal appearance were as odd as his habits; he was of very short stature, with a large head, and bright eyes. He had an extremely delicate ear for music and the harmonies of words; this in part accounts for the beauty of his prose style, which is molded on that of the great writers of the first half of the seventeenth century. He had a keenly analytic intellect, and some of his writings are highly philosophical and imaginative; but like Lamb, as he himself said, he had 'a furious love for nonsense — headlong nonsense'— 'rigmaroling' his friends called it — and the 'Confessions' need not be taken as literal accounts of actual fact.

From CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH OPIUM EATER

I have often been asked how I first came to be a regular opium eater; and have suffered, very unjustly, in the opinion of my acquaintance, from being reputed to have brought upon myself all the sufferings which I shall have to record, by a long course of indulgence in this practice purely for the sake of creating an artificial state of pleasurable excitement. This, however, is a misrepresentation of my case. True it is, that for nearly ten years I did occasionally take opium for the sake of the exquisite pleasure it gave me: but, so long as I took it with this view, I was effectually protected from all material bad consequences, by the necessity of interposing long intervals between the several acts of indulgence, in order to renew the pleasurable sensations. It was not for the purpose of creating pleasure, but of mitigating pain in the severest degree, that I first began to use opium as an article of daily diet. In the twenty-eighth year of my age, a most painful affection of the stomach, which I had

first experienced about ten years before, attacked me in great strength. This affection had originally been caused by extremities of hunger, suffered in my boyish days. During the season of hope and redundant happiness which succeeded (that is, from eighteen to twenty-four) it had slumbered; for the three following years it had revived at intervals; and now, under unfavorable circumstances, from depression of spirits, it attacked me with a violence that yielded to no remedies but opium. As the youthful sufferings, which first produced this derangement of the stomach, were interesting in themselves, and in the circumstances that attended them, I shall here briefly retrace them.

My father died when I was about seven years old, and left me to the care of four guardians. I was sent to various schools, great and small; and was very early distinguished for my classical attainments, especially for my knowledge of Greek. At thirteen I wrote Greek with ease; and at fifteen my command of that language was so great, that I not only composed Greek verses in lyric meters, but could converse in Greek fluently and without embarrassment — an accomplishment which I have not since met with in any scholar of my times, and which, in my case, was owing to the practice of daily reading off the newspapers into the best Greek I could furnish *extempore;* for the necessity of ransacking my memory and invention, for all sorts and combinations of periphrastic expressions, as equivalents for modern ideas, images, relations of things, etc., gave me a compass of diction which would never have been called out by a dull translation of moral essays, etc. 'That boy,' said one of my masters, pointing the attention of a stranger to me, 'that boy could harangue an Athenian mob, better than you and I could address an English one.' He who honored me with this eulogy was a scholar, 'and a ripe and good one;' and of all my tutors, was the only one whom I loved or reverenced. Unfortunately for me (and, as I afterwards learned, to this worthy man's great indignation) I was transferred to the care, first of a blockhead, who was in a perpetual panic, lest I should expose his ignorance; and finally, to that of a respectable scholar, at the head of a great school on an ancient foundation. This man had been appointed to his situation by —— College, Oxford; and was a sound, well-built scholar, but (like most men, whom I have known from that college) coarse, clumsy, and inelegant. A miserable contrast he presented, in my eyes, to the Etonian brilliancy of my favorite master; and beside, he could not disguise from my hourly notice, the poverty and meagerness of his understanding. It is a bad thing for a boy to be, and to know himself, far beyond his tutors, whether in knowledge or in power of mind. This was the case, so far as regarded knowledge at least, not with myself only, for the two boys who jointly with myself composed the first form were better Grecians than the head-master, though not more elegant scholars, nor at all more accustomed to sacrifice to the graces. When I first entered, I remember that we read Sophocles; and it was a constant matter of triumph to us, the learned triumvirate of the first form, to see our 'Archididascalus' (as he loved to be called) conning our lessons before we went up, and laying a regular train, with lexicon and grammar, for blowing up and blasting (as it were) any difficulties he found in the choruses; whilst *we* never condescended to open our books until the moment of going up, and were generally employed in writing epigrams upon his wig, or some such important matter. My two class-fellows were poor, and dependent for their future prospects at the university on the recommendation of the head-master; but I, who had a small patrimonial property, the income of which was sufficient to support me at college, wished to be sent thither immediately. I made earnest representations on the subject to my guardians, but all to no purpose. One, who was more reasonable, and had more knowledge of the world than the rest, lived at a distance; two of the other three resigned all their authority into the hands of the fourth; and this fourth with whom I had to negotiate, was a worthy man, in his way, but haughty, obstinate, and intolerant of all opposition to his will. After a certain number of letters and personal interviews, I found that I had nothing to hope for, not even a compromise of the matter,

from my guardian; unconditional submission was what he demanded; and I prepared myself, therefore, for other measures. Summer was now coming on with hasty steps, and my seventeenth birthday was fast approaching; after which day I had sworn within myself that I would no longer be numbered amongst school-boys. Money being what I chiefly wanted, I wrote to a woman of high rank, who, though young herself, had known me from a child, and had latterly treated me with great distinction, requesting that she would 'lend' me five guineas. For upwards of a week no answer came; and I was beginning to despond, when, at length, a servant put into my hands a double letter, with a coronet on the seal. The letter was kind and obliging; the fair writer was on the sea-coast, and in that way the delay had arisen; she enclosed double of what I had asked, and good-naturedly hinted that if I should *never* repay her, it would not absolutely ruin her. Now then, I was prepared for my scheme; ten guineas, added to about two which I had remaining from my pocket money, seemed to me sufficient for an indefinite length of time; and at that happy age, if no *definite* boundary can be assigned to one's power, the spirit of hope and pleasure makes it virtually infinite.

It is a just remark of Dr. Johnson's (and what cannot often be said of his remarks, it is a very feeling one), that we never do anything consciously for the last time (of things, that is, which we have long been in the habit of doing) without sadness of heart. This truth I felt deeply, when I came to leave ——, a place which I did not love, and where I had not been happy. On the evening before I left —— for ever, I grieved when the ancient and lofty school-room resounded with the evening service, performed for the last time in my hearing and at night, when the muster-roll of names was called over, and mine (as usual) was called first, I stepped forward, and, passing the head-master, who was standing by, I bowed to him, and looked earnestly in his face, thinking to myself, 'He is old and infirm, and in this world I shall not see him again.' I was right: I never *did* see him again, nor ever shall. He looked at me complacently, smiled good-naturedly, returned my salutation (or rather, my valediction), and we parted (though he knew it not) for ever. I could not reverence him intellectually; but he had been uniformly kind to me, and had allowed me many indulgences; and I grieved at the thought of the mortification I should inflict upon him.

The morning came which was to launch me into the world, and from which my whole succeeding life has, in many important points, taken its coloring. I lodged in the head-master's house, and had been allowed, from my first entrance, the indulgence of a private room, which I used both as a sleeping room and as a study. At half after three I rose, and gazed with deep emotion at the ancient towers of ——, 'drest in earliest light,' and beginning to crimson with the radiant luster of a cloudless July morning. I was firm and immovable in my purpose; but yet agitated by anticipation of uncertain danger and troubles; and, if I could have foreseen the hurricane and perfect hail-storm of affliction which soon fell upon me, well might I have been agitated. To this agitation the deep peace of the morning presented an affecting contrast, and in some degree a medicine. The silence was more profound than that of midnight; and to me the silence of a summer morning is more touching than all other silence, because, the light being broad and strong, as that of noon-day at other seasons of the year, it seems to differ from perfect day, chiefly because man is not yet abroad; and thus, the peace of nature, and of the innocent creatures of God, seems to be secure and deep, only so long as the presence of man, and his restless and unquiet spirit, are not there to trouble its sanctity. I dressed myself, took my hat and gloves, and lingered a little in the room. For the last year and a-half this room had been my 'pensive citadel;' here I had read and studied through all the hours of night; and, though true it was, that for the latter part of this time I, who was framed for love and gentle affections, had lost my gaiety and happiness, during the strife and fever of contention with my guardian; yet, on the other hand, as a boy, so passionately fond of books, and dedicated to intel-

lectual pursuits, I could not fail to have enjoyed many happy hours in the midst of general dejection. I wept as I looked round on the chair, hearth, writing-table, and other familiar objects, knowing too certainly, that I looked upon them for the last time. Whilst I write this, it is eighteen years ago; and yet, at this moment, I see distinctly, as if it were yesterday, the lineaments and expression of the object on which I fixed my parting gaze; it was a picture of the lovely ——, which hung over the mantelpiece; the eyes and mouth of which were so beautiful, and the whole countenance so radiant with benignity and divine tranquillity, that I had a thousand times laid down my pen, or my book, to gather consolation from it, as a devotee from his patron saint. Whilst I was yet gazing upon it, the deep tones of —— clock proclaimed that it was four o'clock. I went up to the picture, kissed it, and then gently walked out, and closed the door for ever!

. . . . . .

So blended and intertwisted in this life are occasions of laughter and of tears, that I cannot yet recall, without smiling, an incident which occurred at that time, and which had nearly put a stop to the immediate execution of my plan. I had a trunk of immense weight; for, besides my clothes, it contained nearly all my library. The difficulty was to get this removed to a carrier's; my room was at an aërial elevation in the house, and (what was worse) the stair-case, which communicated with this angle of the building, was accessible only by a gallery which passed the head-master's chamber door. I was a favorite with all the servants; and, knowing that any of them would screen me, and act confidentially, I communicated my embarrassment to a groom of the head-master's. The groom swore he would do anything I wished; and, when the time arrived, went upstairs to bring the trunk down. This I feared was beyond the strength of any one man; however, the groom was a man

> Of Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear
> The weight of mightiest monarchies;

and had a back as spacious as Salisbury Plain. Accordingly he persisted in bringing down the trunk alone, whilst I stood waiting at the foot of the last flight, in anxiety for the event. For some time I heard him descending with slow and firm steps; but unfortunately, from his trepidation, as he drew near the dangerous quarter, within a few steps of the gallery, his foot slipped; and the mighty burden, falling from his shoulders, gained such increase of impetus at each step of the descent, that, on reaching the bottom, it trundled, or rather leaped, right across, with the noise of twenty devils, against the very bed-room door of the archididascalus. My first thought was that all was lost, and that my only chance for executing a retreat was to sacrifice my baggage. However, on reflection, I determined to abide the issue. The groom was in the utmost alarm, both on his own account and on mine; but, in spite of this, so irresistibly had the sense of the ludicrous in this unhappy *contre-temps* taken possession of his fancy, that he sang out a long, loud and canorous peal of laughter, that might have wakened the Seven Sleepers. At the sound of this resonant merriment, within the very ears of insulted authority, I could not myself forbear joining in it; subdued to this, not so much by the unhappy *étourderie* of the trunk, as by the effect it had upon the groom. We both expected, as a matter of course, that Dr. —— would sally out of his room; for in general, if but a mouse stirred, he sprang out like a mastiff from the kennel. Strange to say, however, on this occasion, when the noise of laughter had ceased, no sound, or rustling even, was to be heard in the bed-room. Dr. —— had a painful complaint, which, sometimes keeping him awake, made his sleep, perhaps, when it *did* come, the deeper. Gathering courage from the silence, the groom hoisted his burden again, and accomplished the remainder of his descent, without accident. I waited until I saw the trunk placed on a wheel-barrow, and on its road to the carrier's; then, 'with Providence my guide,' I set off on foot — carrying a small parcel, with some articles of dress, under my arm; a favorite English poet in one pocket, and a small 12mo. volume, containing about nine plays of Euripides, in the other.

* * *

If any man, poor or rich, were to say that he would tell us what had been the happiest day in his life, and the why and the wherefore, I suppose that we should all cry out — Hear him! hear him! As to the happiest *day*, that must be very difficult for any wise man to name; because any event that could occupy so distinguished a place in a man's retrospect of his life, or be entitled to have shed a special felicity on any one day, ought to be of such an enduring character as that (accidents apart) it should have continued to shed the same felicity, or one not distinguishably less, on many years together. To the happiest *lustrum*, however, or even to the happiest *year*, it may be allowed to any man to point without discountenance from wisdom. This year, in my case, reader, was the one which we have now reached; though it stood, I confess, as a parenthesis between years of a gloomier character. It was a year of brilliant water (to speak after the manner of jewelers), set as it were, and insulated, in the gloom and cloudy melancholy of opium. Strange as it may sound, I had a little before this time descended suddenly, and without any considerable effort, from 320 grains of opium (*i. e.*, eight[1] thousand drops of laudanum) per day to forty grains, or one-eighth part. Instantaneously, and as if by magic, the cloud of profoundest melancholy which rested upon my brain, like some black vapors that I have seen roll away from the summits of mountains, drew off in one day (*νυχθήμερον*); passed off with its murky banners as simultaneously as a ship that has been stranded, and is floated off by a spring-tide —

That moveth altogether, if it move at all.

Now, then, I was again happy; I now took only 1,000 drops of laudanum per day; and what was that? A latter spring had come to close up the season of youth; my brain performed its functions as healthily as ever before; I read Kant again, and again I understood him, or fancied that I did. Again my feelings of pleasure expanded themselves to all around me; and if any man from Oxford or Cambridge, or from neither, had been announced to me in my unpretending cottage, I should have welcomed him with as sumptuous a reception as so poor a man could offer. Whatever else was wanting to a wise man's happiness,— of laudanum I would have given him as much as he wished, and in a golden cup. And, by the way, now that I speak of giving laudanum away, I remember, about this time, a little incident, which I mention, because, trifling as it was, the reader will soon meet it again in my dreams, which it influenced more fearfully than could be imagined. One day a Malay knocked at my door. What business a Malay could have to transact amongst English mountains, I cannot conjecture; but possibly he was on his road to a seaport about forty miles distant.

The servant who opened the door to him was a young girl born and bred amongst the mountains, who had never seen an Asiatic dress of any sort; his turban, therefore, confounded her not a little; and, as it turned out, that his attainments in English were exactly of the same extent as hers in the Malay, there seemed to be an impassable gulf fixed between all communication of ideas, if either party had happened to possess any. In this dilemma, the girl, recollecting the reputed learning of her master (and, doubtless, giving me credit for a knowledge of all the languages of the earth, besides, perhaps, a few of the lunar ones), came and gave me to understand that there was a sort of demon below, whom she clearly imagined that my art could exorcise from the house. I did not immediately go down; but, when I did, the group which presented itself, arranged as it was by accident, though not very elaborate, took hold of my fancy and my eye in a way that none of the statuesque attitudes exhibited in the ballets at the Opera House, though so ostentatiously complex, had ever done. In a cottage kitchen, but paneled on the wall with dark wood that from age and rubbing resembled oak, and looking more

[1] I here reckon twenty-five drops of laudanum as equivalent to one grain of opium, which, I believe, is the common estimate. However, as both may be considered variable quantities (the crude opium varying much in strength, and the tincture still more), I suppose that no infinitesimal accuracy can be had in such a calculation. Teaspoons vary as much in size as opium in strength. Small ones hold about 100 drops; so that 8,000 drops are about eighty times a teaspoonful. The reader sees how much I kept within Dr. Buchan's indulgent allowance.

like a rustic hall of entrance than a kitchen, stood the Malay — his turban and loose trousers of dingy white relieved upon the dark paneling; he had placed himself nearer to the girl than she seemed to relish; though her native spirit of mountain intrepidity contended with the feeling of simple awe which her countenance expressed as she gazed upon the tiger-cat before her. And a more striking picture there could not be imagined, than the beautiful English face of the girl, and its exquisite fairness, together with her erect and independent attitude, contrasted with the sallow and bilious skin of the Malay, enameled or veneered with mahogany, by marine air, his small, fierce, restless eyes, thin lips, slavish gestures and adorations. Half-hidden by the ferocious-looking Malay, was a little child from a neighboring cottage who had crept in after him, and was now in the act of reverting its head, and gazing upwards at the turban and the fiery eyes beneath it, whilst with one hand he caught at the dress of the young woman for protection. My knowledge of the Oriental tongues is not remarkably extensive, being indeed confined to two words — the Arabic word for barley, and the Turkish for opium (madjoon), which I have learned from Anastasius. And, as I had neither a Malay dictionary, nor even Adelung's *Mithridates,* which might have helped me to a few words, I addressed him in some lines from the Iliad; considering that, of such languages as I possessed, Greek, in point of longitude, came geographically nearest to an Oriental one. He worshipped me in a most devout manner, and replied in what I suppose was Malay. In this way I saved my reputation with my neighbors; for the Malay had no means of betraying the secret. He lay down upon the floor for about an hour, and then pursued his journey. On his departure I presented him with a piece of opium. To him, as an Orientalist, I concluded that opium must be familiar; and the expression of his face convinced me that it was. Nevertheless, I was struck with some little consternation when I saw him suddenly raise his hand to his mouth, and (in the school-boy phrase) bolt the whole, divided into three pieces, at one mouthful. The quantity was enough to kill three dragoons and their horses; and I felt some alarm for the poor creature; but what could be done? I had given him the opium in compassion for his solitary life, on recollecting that if he had traveled on foot from London, it must be nearly three weeks since he could have exchanged a thought with any human being. I could not think of violating the laws of hospitality, by having him seized and drenched with an emetic, and thus frightening him into a notion that we were going to sacrifice him to some English idol. No: there was clearly no help for it; — he took his leave, and for some days I felt anxious; but as I never heard of any Malay being found dead, I became convinced that he was used[1] to opium: and that I must have done him the service I designed, by giving him one night of respite from the pains of wandering.

This incident I have digressed to mention, because this Malay (partly from the picturesque exhibition he assisted to frame, partly from the anxiety I connected with his image for some days) fastened afterwards upon my dreams, and brought other Malays with him worse than himself, that ran 'a-muck'[2] at me, and led me into a world of troubles. But to quit this episode, and to return to my intercalary year of happiness. I have said already, that on a subject so important to us all as happiness, we should listen with pleasure to any man's experience or experiments, even though he were but a plowboy, who cannot be supposed to have plowed very deep into such an intractable soil as that of human pains and pleasures, or to have conducted

[1] This, however, is not a necessary conclusion; the varieties of effect produced by opium on different constitutions are infinite. A London Magistrate (Harriott's *Struggles through Life,* vol. iii, p. 391, Third Edition), has recorded that, on the first occasion of his trying laudanum for the gout, he took *forty* drops, the next night *sixty,* and on the fifth night *eighty,* without any effect whatever; and this at an advanced age. I have an anecdote from a country surgeon, however, which sinks Mr. Harriott's case into a trifle; and in my projected medical treatise on opium, which I will publish, provided the College of Surgeons will pay me for enlightening their benighted understandings upon this subject, I will relate it; but it is far too good a story to be published gratis.

[2] See the common accounts in any Eastern traveler or voyager of the frantic excesses committed by Malays who have taken opium, or are reduced to desperation by ill luck at gambling.

his researches upon any very enlightened principles. But I, who have taken happiness, both in a solid and a liquid shape, both boiled and unboiled, both East India and Turkey — who have conducted my experiments upon this interesting subject with a sort of galvanic battery — and have, for the general benefit of the world, inoculated myself, as it were, with the poison of 8,000 drops of laudanum per day (just, for the same reason, as a French surgeon inoculated himself lately with cancer — an English one, twenty years ago, with plague — and a third, I know not of what nation, with hydrophobia),— *I* (it will be admitted) must surely know what happiness is, if anybody does. And, therefore, I will here lay down an analysis of happiness; and as the most interesting mode of communicating it, I will give it, not didactically, but wrapped up and involved in a picture of one evening, as I spent every evening during the intercalary year when laudanum, though taken daily, was to me no more than the elixir of pleasure. This done, I shall quit the subject of happiness altogether, and pass to a very different one — the *pains of opium.*

Let there be a cottage, standing in a valley, eighteen miles from any town — no spacious valley, but about two miles long, by three quarters of a mile in average width; the benefit of which provision is, that all the families resident within its circuit will compose, as it were, one larger household personally familiar to your eye, and more or less interesting to your affections. Let the mountains be real mountains, between three and four thousand feet high; and the cottage a real cottage, not (as a witty author has it) 'a cottage with a double coach-house'; let it be, in fact (for I must abide by the actual scene), a white cottage, embowered with flowering shrubs, so chosen as to unfold a succession of flowers upon the walls, and clustering round the windows through all the months of spring, summer, and autumn — beginning, in fact, with May roses, and ending with jasmine. Let it, however, *not* be spring, nor summer, nor autumn — but winter in his sternest shape. This is a most important point in the science of happiness. And I am surprised to see people overlook it, and think it matter of congratulation that winter is going, or, if coming, is not likely to be a severe one. On the contrary, I put up a petition annually, for as much snow, hail, frost, or storm, of one kind or other, as the skies can possibly afford us. Surely everybody is aware of the divine pleasures which attend a winter fireside; candles at four o'clock, warm hearth-rugs, tea, a fair tea-maker, shutters closed, curtains flowing in ample draperies on the floor, whilst the wind and rain are raging audibly without,

> And at the doors and windows seem to call,
> As heaven and earth they would together mell;
> Yet the least entrance find they none at all;
> Whence sweeter grows our rest secure in massy hall.
>
> — *Castle of Indolence.*

All these are items in the description of a winter evening, which must surely be familiar to everybody born in a high latitude. And it is evident that most of these delicacies, like ice-cream, require a very low temperature of the atmosphere to produce them: they are fruits which cannot be ripened without weather stormy or inclement, in some way or other. I am not '*particular,*' as people say, whether it be snow, or black frost, or wind so strong, that (as Mr. —— says) 'you may lean your back against it like a post.' I can put up even with rain, provided it rains cats and dogs; but something of the sort I must have; and, if I have it not, I think myself in a manner ill-used; for why am I called on to pay so heavily for winter, in coals, and candles, and various privations that will occur even to gentlemen, if I am not to have the article good of its kind? No: a Canadian winter for my money; or a Russian one, where every man is but a co-proprietor with the north wind in the fee-simple of his own ears. Indeed, so great an epicure am I in this matter, that I cannot relish a winter night fully if it be much past St. Thomas's day, and have degenerated into disgusting tendencies to vernal appearances; no, it must be divided by a thick wall of dark nights from all return of light and sunshine. From the latter weeks of October to Christmas Eve, therefore, is the period during which

happiness is in season, which, in my judgment, enters the room with the tea-tray; for tea, though ridiculed by those who are naturally of coarse nerves, or are become so from wine-drinking, and are not susceptible of influence from so refined a stimulant, will always be the favorite beverage of the intellectual; and, for my part, I would have joined Dr. Johnson in a *bellum internecinum* against Jonas Hanway, or any other impious person, who should presume to disparage it. But here, to save myself the trouble of too much verbal description, I will introduce a painter, and give him directions for the rest of the picture. Painters do not like white cottages, unless a good deal weather-stained; but as the reader now understands that it is a winter night, his services will not be required, except for the inside of the house.

Paint me, then, a room seventeen feet by twelve, and not more than seven and a half feet high. This, reader, is somewhat ambitiously styled, in my family, the drawing-room; but, being contrived 'a double debt to pay,' it is also, and more justly, termed the library; for it happens that books are the only article of property in which I am richer than my neighbors. Of these I have about five thousand, collected gradually since my eighteenth year. Therefore, painter, put as many as you can into this room. Make it populous with books; and, furthermore, paint me a good fire; and furniture plain and modest, befitting the unpretending cottage of a scholar. And, near the fire paint me a tea-table; and (as it is clear that no creature can come to see one such a stormy night), place only two cups and saucers on the tea-tray; and, if you know how to paint such a thing symbolically, or otherwise, paint me an eternal tea-pot — eternal *à parte ante,* and *à parte post;* for I usually drink tea from eight o'clock at night to four o'clock in the morning. And, as it is very unpleasant to make tea, or to pour it out for oneself, paint me a lovely young woman, sitting at the table. Paint her arms like Aurora's, and her smiles like Hebe's.— But no, dear M——, not even in jest let me insinuate that thy power to illuminate my cottage rests upon a tenure so perishable as mere personal beauty; or that the witchcraft of angelic smiles lies within the empire of any earthly pencil. Pass, then, my good painter, to something more within its power; and the next article brought forward should naturally be myself — a picture of the Opium-eater, with his 'little golden receptacle of the pernicious drug' lying beside him on the table. As to the opium, I have no objection to see a picture of *that,* though I would rather see the original: you may paint it if you choose; but I apprise you, that no 'little' receptacle would, even in 1816, answer *my* purpose, who was at a distance from the 'stately Pantheon,' and all druggists (mortal or otherwise). No; you may as well paint the real receptacle, which was not of gold, but of glass, and as much like a wine-decanter as possible. Into this you may put a quart of ruby-colored laudanum: that, and a book of German Metaphysics placed by its side, will sufficiently attest my being in the neighborhood; but, as to myself,— there I demur. I admit that, naturally, I ought to occupy the foreground of the picture; that being the hero of the piece, or (if you choose) the criminal at the bar, my body should be had into court. This seems reasonable; but why should I confess, on this point, to a painter? or why confess at all? If the public (into whose private ear I am confidentially whispering my confessions, and not into any painter's) should chance to have framed some agreeable picture for itself, of the Opium-eater's exterior — should have ascribed to him, romantically, an elegant person, or a handsome face, why should I barbarously tear from it so pleasing a delusion — pleasing both to the public and to me? No: paint me, if at all, according to your own fancy; and, as a painter's fancy should teem with beautiful creations, I cannot fail, in that way, to be a gainer. And now, reader, we have run through all the ten categories of my condition as it stood about 1816–17; up to the middle of which latter year I judge myself to have been a happy man; and the elements of that happiness I have endeavored to place before you, in the above sketch of the interior of a scholar's library, in a cottage among the mountains, on a stormy winter evening.

* * * (1821)

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY (1800–1859).

Macaulay's life is a remarkable story of successful endeavor. The son of a well-known philanthropist and anti-slavery agitator, he was a precocious boy, with a natural aptitude for literary composition and a phenomenal memory; he began a compendium of universal history at the age of seven, and repeated after a lapse of forty years a scrap of poetry he had read as a youth in a country newspaper and had not recalled in the interval; he knew *Paradise Lost* and *Pilgrim's Progress* by heart. He went in 1818 to Trinity College, Cambridge, and left with a fellowship which secured him a sufficient income for his personal wants for the next seven years. An essay on Milton he contributed to the *Edinburgh Review* in 1825 attracted the attention of the editor, Jeffrey, who said to him, 'The more I think, the less I can conceive where you picked up that style.' In 1830 he entered the House of Commons as member for Calne, and at once made his mark by a speech on the Reform Bill. The termination of his fellowship in 1831 put him in somewhat straitened circumstances, and he was obliged to sell the gold medals he had won at the university; but a way out of all financial difficulties was found in 1833 by his appointment as a member of the Supreme Council of India for five years at a salary of £10,000 a year. He did valuable work in India, reconstructing the educational system and drawing up a criminal code, beside doing an enormous amount of private reading. On his return home, he began his *History of England*, and published a collection of his essays, which at once obtained a very large sale. He was elected member for Edinburgh, and became Secretary for War, with a seat in the cabinet. The ministry fell in 1841, and in 1847 Macaulay was rejected by his constituency. He wrote a poem to the effect that literature had been his consolation under all the trials of life, 'of which,' says one biographer, 'it was rather difficult to make a respectable list.' The Edinburgh seat again becoming vacant, he was re-elected without any exertion on his part, but he adhered to his determination to give the rest of his life to literature. The first two volumes of his History were published in 1848, the third and fourth in 1855; from the first it enjoyed very great popularity, and his publishers sent him a check for £20,000. He was raised to the peerage, and buried in Westminster Abbey. He never married, but was devoted to his sisters and their children; his nephew, Sir G. O. Trevelyan, wrote his life, and has attained a considerable reputation as a politician and man of letters.

Macaulay has not Lamb's delicate humor, or De Quincey's philosophical imagination. He disliked speculation, and his idea of history was to present accumulated facts with the attractiveness of fiction. His worst fault is a tendency to emphasize the commonplace — 'blackening the chimney,' Sir Leslie Stephen calls it — but his judgment is generally sound, as far as it goes. His style has no subtle harmonies, but is admirable for mechanical excellences — orderly arrangement of material, careful paragraphing, and absolute clearness of statement. In these points he offers a better model for young writers than De Quincey, Carlyle, Ruskin, and other masters of a more elaborate style.

THE ROMANCE OF HISTORY

The best historians of later times have been seduced from truth, not by their imagination, but by their reason. They far excel their predecessors in the art of deducing general principles from facts. But unhappily they have fallen into the error of distorting facts to suit general principles. They arrive at a theory from looking at some of the phenomena; and the remaining phenomena they strain or curtail to suit the theory. For this purpose it is not necessary that they should assert what is absolutely false; for all questions in morals and politics are questions of comparison and degree. Any proposition which does not involve a contradiction in terms may by possibility be true; and if all the circumstances which raise a probability in its favor be stated and enforced, and those which lead to an opposite conclusion be omitted or lightly passed over, it may appear to be demonstrated. In every human character and transaction there is a mixture of good

and evil: a little exaggeration, a little suppression, a judicious use of epithets, a watchful and searching scepticism with respect to the evidence on one side, a convenient credulity with respect to every report or tradition on the other, may easily make a saint of Laud, or a tyrant of Henry IV.

This species of misrepresentation abounds in the most valuable works of modern historians. Herodotus tells his story like a slovenly witness, who, heated by partialities and prejudices, unacquainted with the established rules of evidence, and uninstructed as to the obligations of his oath, confounds what he imagines with what he has seen and heard, and brings out facts, reports, conjectures, and fancies, in one mass. Hume is an accomplished advocate. Without positively asserting much more than he can prove, he gives prominence to all the circumstances which support his case; he glides lightly over those which are unfavorable to it; his own witnesses are applauded and encouraged; the statements which seem to throw discredit on them are controverted; the contradictions into which they fall are explained away; a clear and connected abstract of their evidence is given. Everything that is offered on the other side is scrutinized with the utmost severity; every suspicious circumstance is a ground for comment and invective; what cannot be denied is extenuated, or passed by without notice; concessions even are sometimes made: but this insidious candor only increases the effect of the vast mass of sophistry.

We have mentioned Hume as the ablest and most popular writer of his class; but the charge which we have brought against him is one to which all our most distinguished historians are in some degree obnoxious. Gibbon, in particular, deserves very severe censure. Of all the numerous culprits, however, none is more deeply guilty than Mr. Mitford. We willingly acknowledge the obligations which are due to his talents and industry. The modern historians of Greece had been in the habit of writing as if the world had learned nothing new during the last sixteen hundred years. Instead of illustrating the events which they narrated by the philosophy of a more enlightened age, they judged of antiquity by itself alone. They seemed to think that notions, long driven from every other corner of literature, had a prescriptive right to occupy this last fastness. They considered all the ancient historians as equally authentic. They scarcely made any distinction between him who related events at which he had himself been present and him who five hundred years after composed a philosophic romance for a society which had in the interval undergone a complete change. It was all Greek, and all true! The centuries which separated Plutarch from Thucydides seemed as nothing to men who lived in an age so remote. The distance of time produced an error similar to that which is sometimes produced by distance of place. There are many good ladies who think that all the people in India live together, and who charge a friend setting out for Calcutta with kind messages to Bombay. To Rollin and Barthelemi, in the same manner, all the classics were contemporaries.

Mr. Mitford certainly introduced great improvements; he showed us that men who wrote in Greek and Latin sometimes told lies; he showed us that ancient history might be related in such a manner as to furnish not only allusions to schoolboys, but important lessons to statesmen. From that love of theatrical effect and high-flown sentiment which had poisoned almost every other work on the same subject his book is perfectly free. But his passion for a theory as false, and far more ungenerous, led him substantially to violate truth in every page. Statements unfavorable to democracy are made with unhesitating confidence, and with the utmost bitterness of language. Every charge brought against a monarch or an aristocracy is sifted with the utmost care. If it cannot be denied, some palliating supposition is suggested; or we are at least reminded that some circumstances now unknown *may* have justified what at present appears unjustifiable. Two events are reported by the same author in the same sentence; their truth rests on the same testimony; but the one supports the darling hypothesis, and the other seems inconsistent with it. The one is taken and the other is left.

The practice of distorting narrative into a conformity with theory is a vice not so unfavorable as at first sight it may appear to the interests of political science. We have compared the writers who indulge in it to advocates; and we may add that their conflicting fallacies, like those of advocates, correct each other. It has always been held, in the most enlightened nations, that a tribunal will decide a judicial question most fairly when it has heard two able men argue, as unfairly as possible, on the two opposite sides of it; and we are inclined to think that this opinion is just. Sometimes, it is true, superior eloquence and dexterity will make the worse appear the better reason; but it is at least certain that the judge will be compelled to contemplate the case under two different aspects. It is certain that no important consideration will altogether escape notice.

This is at present the state of history. The poet laureate appears for the Church of England, Lingard for the Church of Rome. Brodie has moved to set aside the verdicts obtained by Hume; and the cause in which Mitford succeeded is, we understand, about to be reheard. In the midst of these disputes, however, history proper, if we may use the term, is disappearing. The high, grave, impartial summing up of Thucydides is nowhere to be found.

While our historians are practising all the arts of controversy, they miserably neglect the art of narration, the art of interesting the affections and presenting pictures to the imagination. That a writer may produce these effects without violating truth is sufficiently proved by many excellent biographical works. The immense popularity which well-written books of this kind have acquired deserves the serious consideration of historians. Voltaire's Charles the Twelfth, Marmontel's Memoirs, Boswell's life of Johnson, Southey's account of Nelson, are perused with delight by the most frivolous and indolent. Whenever any tolerable book of the same description makes its appearance, the circulating libraries are mobbed; the book societies are in commotion; the new novel lies uncut; the magazines and newspapers fill their columns with extracts. In the meantime histories of great empires, written by men of eminent ability, lie unread on the shelves of ostentatious libraries.

The writers of history seem to entertain an aristocratical contempt for the writers of memoirs. They think it beneath the dignity of men who describe the revolutions of nations to dwell on the details which constitute the charm of biography. They have imposed on themselves a code of conventional decencies as absurd as that which has been the bane of the French drama. The most characteristic and interesting circumstances are omitted or softened down, because, as we are told, they are too trivial for the majesty of history. The majesty of history seems to resemble the majesty of the poor King of Spain, who died a martyr to ceremony because the proper dignitaries were not at hand to render him assistance.

That history would be more amusing if this etiquette were relaxed will, we suppose, be acknowledged. But would it be less dignified or less useful? What do we mean when we say that one past event is important and another insignificant? No past event has any intrinsic importance. The knowledge of it is valuable only as it leads us to form just calculations with respect to the future. A history which does not serve this purpose, though it may be filled with battles, treaties, and commotions, is as useless as the series of turnpike tickets collected by Sir Matthew Mite.

Let us suppose that Lord Clarendon, instead of filling hundreds of folio pages with copies of state papers in which the same assertions and contradictions are repeated till the reader is overpowered with weariness, had condescended to be the Boswell of the Long Parliament. Let us suppose that he had exhibited to us the wise and lofty self-government of Hampden, leading while he seemed to follow, and propounding unanswerable arguments in the strongest forms with the modest air of an inquirer anxious for information; the delusions which misled the noble spirit of Vane; the coarse fanaticism which concealed the yet loftier genius of Cromwell, destined to control a mutinous army and a factious people, to abase the flag of Holland, to arrest the victorious arms of Sweden, and to hold the balance firm between the rival

monarchies of France and Spain. Let us suppose that he had made his Cavaliers and Roundheads talk in their own style; that he had reported some of the ribaldry of Rupert's pages, and some of the cant of Harrison and Fleetwood. Would not his work in that case have been more interesting? Would it not have been more accurate?

A history in which every particular incident may be true may on the whole be false. The circumstances which have most influence on the happiness of mankind, the changes of manners and morals, the transition of communities from poverty to wealth, from knowledge to ignorance, from ferocity to humanity — these are, for the most part, noiseless revolutions. Their progress is rarely indicated by what historians are pleased to call important events. They are not achieved by armies, or enacted by senates. They are sanctioned by no treaties, and recorded in no archives. They are carried on in every school, in every church, behind ten thousand counters, at ten thousand firesides. The upper current of society presents no certain criterion by which we can judge of the direction in which the under current flows. We read of defeats and victories. But we know that nations may be miserable amidst victories and prosperous amidst defeats. We read of the fall of wise ministers and of the rise of profligate favorites. But we must remember how small a proportion the good or evil effected by a single statesman can bear to the good or evil of a great social system.

Bishop Watson compares a geologist to a gnat mounted on an elephant, and laying down theories as to the whole internal structure of the vast animal, from the phenomena of the hide. The comparison is unjust to the geologists; but is very applicable to those historians who write as if the body politic were homogeneous, who look only on the surface of affairs, and never think of the mighty and various organization which lies deep below.

In the works of such writers as these, England, at the close of the Seven Years' War, is in the highest state of prosperity: at the close of the American war she is in a miserable and degraded condition; as if the people were not on the whole as rich, as well governed, and as well educated at the latter period as at the former. We have read books called Histories of England, under the reign of George the Second, in which the rise of Methodism is not even mentioned. A hundred years hence this breed of authors will, we hope, be extinct. If it should still exist, the late ministerial interregnum will be described in terms which will seem to imply that all government was at end; that the social contract was annulled; and that the hand of every man was against his neighbor until the wisdom and virtue of the new cabinet educed order out of the chaos of anarchy. We are quite certain that misconceptions as gross prevail at this moment respecting many important parts of our annals.

The effect of historical reading is analogous, in many respects, to that produced by foreign travel. The student, like the tourist, is transported into a new state of society. He sees new fashions. He hears new modes of expression. His mind is enlarged by contemplating the wide diversities of laws, of morals and of manners. But men may travel far, and return with minds as contracted as if they had never stirred from their own market-town. In the same manner, men may know the dates of many battles and the genealogies of many royal houses, and yet be no wiser. Most people look at past times as princes look at foreign countries. More than one illustrious stranger has landed on our island amidst the shouts of a mob, has dined with the King, has hunted with the master of the stag-hounds, has seen the Guards reviewed, and a knight of the garter installed, has cantered along Regent Street, has visited Saint Paul's, and noted down its dimensions; and has then departed, thinking that he has seen England. He has, in fact, seen a few public buildings, public men, and public ceremonies. But of the vast and complex system of society, of the fine shades of national character, of the practical operation of government and laws, he knows nothing. He who would understand these things rightly must not confine his observations to palaces and solemn days. He must see ordinary men as they appear in their ordinary business and in their ordinary pleasures. He must mingle in the crowds

of the exchange and the coffee-house. He must obtain admittance to the convivial table and the domestic hearth. He must bear with vulgar expressions. He must not shrink from exploring even the retreats of misery. He who wishes to understand the condition of mankind in former ages must proceed on the same principle. If he attends only to public transactions, to wars, congresses, and debates, his studies will be as unprofitable as the travels of those imperial, royal and serene sovereigns who form their judgment of our island from having gone in state to a few fine sights, and from having held formal conferences with a few great officers.

The perfect historian is he in whose work the character and spirit of an age is exhibited in miniature. He relates no fact, he attributes no expression to his characters, which is not authenticated by sufficient testimony. But, by judicious selection, rejection, and arrangement, he gives to truth those attractions which have been usurped by fiction. In his narrative a due subordination is observed: some transactions are prominent; others retire. But the scale on which he represents them is increased or diminished, not according to the dignity of the persons concerned in them, but according to the degree in which they elucidate the condition of society and the nature of man. He shows us the court, the camp, and the senate. But he shows us also the nation. He considers no anecdote, no peculiarity of manner, no familiar saying, as too insignificant for his notice which is not too insignificant to illustrate the operation of laws, of religion, and of education, and to mark the progress of the human mind. Men will not merely be described, but will be made intimately known to us. The changes of manners will be indicated, not merely by a few general phrases or a few extracts from statistical documents, but by appropriate images presented in every line.

If a man, such as we are supposing, should write the history of England, he would assuredly not omit the battles, the sieges, the negotiations, the seditions, the ministerial changes. But with these he would intersperse the details which are the charm of historical romances. At Lincoln Cathedral there is a beautiful painted window, which was made by an apprentice out of the pieces of glass which had been rejected by his master. It is so far superior to every other in the church, that, according to the tradition, the vanquished artist killed himself from mortification. Sir Walter Scott, in the same manner, has used those fragments of truth which historians have scornfully thrown behind them in a manner which may well excite their envy. He has constructed out of their gleanings works which, even considered as histories, are scarcely less valuable than theirs. But a truly great historian would reclaim those materials which the novelist has appropriated. The history of the government, and the history of the people, would be exhibited in that mode in which alone they can be exhibited justly, in inseparable conjunction and intermixture. We should not then have to look for the wars and votes of the Puritans in Clarendon, and for their phraseology in Old Mortality; for one half of King James in Hume, and for the other half in the Fortunes of Nigel.

The early part of our imaginary history would be rich with coloring from romance, ballad, and chronicle. We should find ourselves in the company of knights such as those of Froissart, and of pilgrims such as those who rode with Chaucer from the Tabard. Society would be shown from the highest to the lowest,— from the royal cloth of state to the den of the outlaw; from the throne of the Legate to the chimney-corner where the begging friar regaled himself. Palmers, minstrels, crusaders,— the stately monastery, with the good cheer in its refectory and the high-mass in its chapel, — the manor-house, with its hunting and hawking,— the tournament, with the heralds and ladies, the trumpets and the cloth of gold,— would give truth and life to the representation. We should perceive, in a thousand slight touches, the importance of the privileged burgher, and the fierce and haughty spirit which swelled under the collar of the degraded villain. The revival of letters would not merely be described in a few magnificent periods. We should discern, in innumerable particulars, the fermentation of mind, the eager appetite for knowledge, which distinguished the sixteenth from

the fifteenth century. In the Reformation we should see, not merely a schism which changed the ecclesiastical constitution of England and the mutual relations of the European powers, but a moral war which raged in every family, which set the father against the son, and the son against the father, the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother. Henry would be painted with the skill of Tacitus. We should have the change of his character from his profuse and joyous youth to his savage and imperious old age. We should perceive the gradual progress of selfish and tyrannical passions in a mind not naturally insensible or ungenerous; and to the last we should detect some remains of that open and noble temper which endeared him to a people whom he oppressed, struggling with the hardness of despotism and the irritability of disease. We should see Elizabeth in all her weakness and in all her strength, surrounded by the handsome favorites whom she never trusted, and the wise old statesman whom she never dismissed, uniting in herself the most contradictory qualities of both her parents,— the coquetry, the caprice, the petty malice of Anne,— the haughty and resolute spirit of Henry. We have no hesitation in saying that a great artist might produce a portrait of this remarkable woman at least as striking as that in the novel of Kenilworth, without employing a single trait not authenticated by ample testimony. In the meantime, we should see arts cultivated, wealth accumulated, the conveniences of life improved. We should see the keeps, where nobles, insecure themselves, spread insecurity around them, gradually giving place to the halls of peaceful opulence, to the oriels of Longleat, and the stately pinnacles of Burleigh. We should see towns extended, deserts cultivated, the hamlets of fisherman turned into wealthy havens, the meal of the peasant improved, and his hut more commodiously furnished. We should see those opinions and feelings which produced the great struggle against the House of Stuart slowly growing up in the bosom of private families, before they manifested themselves in parliamentary debates. Then would come the Civil War. Those skirmishes on which Clarendon dwells so minutely would be told, as Thucydides would have told them, with perspicuous conciseness. They are merely connecting links. But the great characteristics of the age, the loyal enthusiasm of the brave English gentry, the fierce licentiousness of the swearing, dicing, drunken reprobates whose excesses disgraced the royal cause, — the austerity of the Presbyterian Sabbaths in the city, the extravagance of the independent preachers in the camp, the precise garb, the severe countenance, the petty scruples, the affected accent, the absurd names and phrases which marked the Puritans,— the valor, the policy, the public spirit, which lurked beneath these ungraceful disguises,— the dreams of the raving Fifth-monarchy-man, the dreams, scarcely less wild, of the philosophic republican,— all these would enter into the representation, and render it at once more exact and more striking.

The instruction derived from history thus written would be of a vivid and practical character. It would be received by the imagination as well as by the reason. It would be not merely traced on the mind, but branded into it. Many truths, too, would be learned, which can be learned in no other manner. As the history of states is generally written, the greatest and most momentous revolutions seem to come upon them like supernatural inflictions, without warning or cause. But the fact is, that such revolutions are almost always the consequences of moral changes, which have gradually passed on the mass of the community, and which ordinarily proceed far, before their progress is indicated by any public measure. An intimate knowledge of the domestic history of nations is therefore absolutely necessary to the prognosis of political events. A narrative, defective in this respect, is as useless as a medical treatise which should pass by all the symptoms attendant on the early stage of a disease and mention only what occurs when the patient is beyond the reach of remedies.

A historian such as we have been attempting to describe would indeed be an intellectual prodigy. In his mind, powers scarcely compatible with each other must be tempered into an exquisite harmony. We shall sooner see another Shakspere

or another Homer. The highest excellence to which any single faculty can be brought would be less surprising than such a happy and delicate combination of qualities. Yet the contemplation of imaginary models is not an unpleasant or useless employment of the mind. It cannot indeed produce perfection; but it produces improvement, and nourishes that generous and liberal fastidiousness which is not inconsistent with the strongest sensibility to merit, and which, while it exalts our conceptions of the art, does not render us unjust to the artist.

(1828)

THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND

(From VOL. I, CHAP. III, ON THE STATE OF ENGLAND IN 1685)

The coffee-house must not be dismissed with a cursory mention. It might, indeed, at that time have been not improperly called a most important political institution. No Parliament had sat for years. The municipal council of the city had ceased to speak the sense of the citizens. Public meetings, harangues, resolutions, and the rest of the modern machinery of agitation had not yet come into fashion. Nothing resembling the modern newspaper existed. In such circumstances the coffee-houses were the chief organs through which the public opinion of the metropolis vented itself.

The first of these establishments had been set up, in the time of the Commonwealth, by a Turkey merchant, who had acquired among the Mahometans a taste for their favorite beverage. The convenience of being able to make appointments in any part of the town, and of being able to pass evenings socially at a very small charge, was so great that the fashion spread fast. Every man of the upper or middle class went daily to his coffee-house to learn the news and to discuss it. Every coffee-house had one or more orators to whose eloquence the crowd listened with admiration, and who soon became, what the journalists of our time have been called, a fourth Estate of the realm. The court had long seen with uneasiness the growth of this new power in the state. An attempt had been made, during Danby's administration, to close the coffee-houses. But men of all parties missed their usual places of resort so much that there was a universal outcry. The government did not venture, in opposition to a feeling so strong and general, to enforce a regulation of which the legality might well be questioned. Since that time ten years had elapsed, and during those years the number and influence of the coffee-houses had been constantly increasing. Foreigners remarked that the coffee-house was that which especially distinguished London from all other cities; that the coffee-house was the Londoner's home, and that those who wished to find a gentleman commonly asked, not whether he lived in Fleet Street or Chancery Lane, but whether he frequented the Grecian or the Rainbow. Nobody was excluded from these places who laid down his penny at the bar. Yet every rank and profession, and every shade of religious and political opinion, had its own headquarters. There were houses near Saint James's Park where fops congregated, their heads and shoulders covered with black or flaxen wigs, not less ample than those which are now worn by the Chancellor and by the Speaker of the House of Commons. The wig came from Paris; and so did the rest of the fine gentleman's ornaments, his embroidered coat, his fringed gloves, and the tassel which upheld his pantaloons. The conversation was in that dialect, which, long after it had ceased to be spoken in fashionable circles, continued, in the mouth of Lord Foppington, to excite the mirth of theaters.[1] The atmosphere was like that of a perfumer's shop. Tobacco in any other form than that of richly scented snuff was held in abomination. If any clown, ignorant of the usages of the house, called for a pipe, the sneers of the whole assembly and the short answers of the waiters soon convinced him that he had better go somewhere else. Nor, indeed, would he have had far to go. For, in general, the coffee-rooms

[1] The chief peculiarity of this dialect was that, in a large class of words, the O was pronounced like A. Thus Lord was pronounced Lard. See Vanbrugh's Relapse. Lord Sunderland was a great master of this court tune, as Roger North calls it; and Titus Oates affected it in the hope of passing for a fine gentleman. Examen, 77, 254.

reeked with tobacco like a guard-room; and strangers sometimes expressed their surprise that so many people should leave their own firesides to sit in the midst of eternal fog and stench. Nowhere was the smoking more constant than at Will's. That celebrated house, situated between Covent Garden and Bow Street, was sacred to polite letters. There the talk was about poetical justice and the unities of place and time. There was a faction for Perrault and the moderns, a faction for Boileau and the ancients. One group debated whether Paradise Lost ought not to have been in rime. To another an envious poetaster demonstrated that Venice Preserved ought to have been hooted from the stage. Under no roof was a greater variety of figures to be seen. There were earls in stars and garters, clergymen in cassocks and bands, pert Templars, sheepish lads from the universities, translators and index-makers in ragged coats of frieze. The great press was to get near the chair where John Dryden sat. In winter that chair was always in the warmest nook by the fire; in summer it stood in the balcony. To bow to the Laureate, and to hear his opinion of Racine's last tragedy or of Bossu's treatise on epic poetry, was thought a privilege. A pinch from his snuff-box was an honor sufficient to turn the head of a young enthusiast. There were coffee-houses where the first medical men might be consulted. Dr. John Radcliffe, who, in the year 1685, rose to the largest practice in London, came daily, at the hour when the Exchange was full, from his house in Bow Street, then a fashionable part of the capital, to Garraway's, and was to be found, surrounded by surgeons and apothecaries, at a particular table. There were Puritan coffee-houses where no oath was heard, and where lank-haired men discussed election and reprobation through their noses; Jew coffee-houses where dark-eyed money changers from Venice and from Amsterdam greeted each other; and popish coffee-houses where, as good Protestants believed, Jesuits planned, over their cups, another great fire, and cast silver bullets to shoot the King.[1]

These gregarious habits had no small share in forming the character of the Londoner of that age. He was, indeed, a different being from the rustic Englishman. There was not then the intercourse which now exists between the two classes. Only very great men were in the habit of dividing the year between town and country. Few esquires came to the capital thrice in their lives. Nor was it yet the practice of all citizens in easy circumstances to breathe the fresh air of the fields and woods during some weeks of every summer. A cockney in a rural village was stared at as much as if he had intruded into a kraal of Hottentots. On the other hand, when the lord of a Lincolnshire or Shropshire manor appeared in Fleet Street, he was as easily distinguished from the resident population as a Turk or a Lascar. His dress, his gait, his accent, the manner in which he gazed at the shops, stumbled into the gutters, ran against the porters, and stood under the waterspouts, marked him out as an excellent subject for the operations of swindlers and banterers. Bullies jostled him into the kennel. Hackney coachmen splashed him from head to foot. Thieves explored with perfect security the huge pockets of his horseman's coat, while he stood entranced by the splendor of the Lord Mayor's show. Moneydroppers, sore from the cart's tail, introduced themselves to him, and appeared to him the most honest friendly gentlemen that he had ever seen. Painted women, the refuse of Lewkner Lane and Whetstone Park, passed themselves on him for countesses and maids of honor. If he asked his way to Saint James's, his informants sent him to Mile End. If he went into a shop, he was instantly discerned to be a fit purchaser of everything that nobody else would buy, of second-hand embroidery, copper rings, and watches that would not go. If he rambled into any fashionable coffee-house, he became a mark for the insolent

[1] Lettres sur les Anglois; Tom Brown's Tour; Ward's London Spy; The Character of a Coffee House, 1673; Rules and Orders of the Coffee House, 1674; Coffee Houses vindicated, 1675; A Satyr against Coffee; North's Examen, 138; Life of Guildford, 152; Life of Sir Dudley North, 149; Life of Dr. Radcliffe, published by Curll in 1715. The liveliest description of Will's is in the City and Country Mouse. There is a remarkable passage about the influence of the coffee house orators in Halstead's Succinct Genealogies, printed in 1685.

derision of fops and the grave waggery of Templars. Enraged and mortified, he soon returned to his mansion, and there, in the homage of his tenants and the conversation of his boon companions, found consolation for the vexations and humiliations which he had undergone. There he was once more a great man, and saw nothing above himself except when at the assizes he took his seat on the bench near the judge, or when at the muster of the militia he saluted the Lord Lieutenant.

The chief cause which made the fusion of the different elements of society so imperfect was the extreme difficulty which our ancestors found in passing from place to place. Of all inventions, the alphabet and the printing-press alone excepted, those inventions which abridge distance have done most for the civilization of our species. Every improvement of the means of locomotion benefits mankind morally and intellectually as well as materially, and not only facilitates the interchange of the various productions of nature and art, but tends to remove national and provincial antipathies, and to bind together all the branches of the great human family. In the seventeenth century the inhabitants of London were, for almost every practical purpose, farther from Reading than they now are from Edinburgh, and farther from Edinburgh than they now are from Vienna.

The subjects of Charles the Second were not, it is true, quite unacquainted with that principle which has, in our own time, produced an unprecedented revolution in human affairs, which has enabled navies to advance in face of wind and tide, and brigades of troops, attended by all their baggage and artillery, to traverse kingdoms at a pace equal to that of the fleetest race horse. The Marquess of Worcester had recently observed the expansive power of moisture rarefied by heat. After many experiments he had succeeded in constructing a rude steam engine, which he called a fire water work, and which he pronounced to be an admirable and most forcible instrument of propulsion.[1] But the Marquess was suspected to be a madman, and known to be a Paptist. His inventions, therefore, found no favorable reception. His fire water work might, perhaps, furnish matter for conversation at a meeting of the Royal Society, but was not applied to any practical purpose. There were no railways, except a few made of timber, on which coals were carried from the mouths of the Northumbrian pits to the banks of the Tyne.[2] There was very little international communication by water. A few attempts had been made to deepen and embank the natural streams, but with slender success. Hardly a single navigable canal had been even projected. The English of that day were in the habit of talking with mingled admiration and despair of the immense trench by which Louis the Fourteenth had made a junction between the Atlantic and Mediterranean. They little thought that their country would, in the course of a few generations, be intersected, at the cost of private adventurers, by artificial rivers making up more than four times the length of the Thames, the Severn, and the Trent together.

It was by the highways that both travelers and goods generally passed from place to place; and those highways appear to have been far worse than might have been expected from the degree of wealth and civilization which the nation had even then attained. On the best lines of communication the ruts were deep, the descents precipitous, and the way often such as it was hardly possible to distinguish, in the dusk, from the uninclosed heath and fen which lay on both sides. Ralph Thoresby, the antiquary, was in danger of losing his way on the great North road, between Barnby Moor and Tuxford, and actually lost his way between Doncaster and York.[3] Pepys and his wife, traveling in their own coach, lost their way between Newbury and Reading. In the course of the same tour they lost their way near Salisbury, and were in danger of having to pass the night on the plain.[4] It was only in fine weather that the whole breadth of the road was available for wheeled vehicles. Often the mud lay deep on the right and the left; and only a narrow track of firm ground rose above the quagmire.[5] At

[1] Century of Inventions, 1663, No. 68.

[2] North's Life of Guildford, 136.

[3] Thoresby's Diary, Oct. 21, 1680, Aug. 3, 1712.

[4] Pepys's Diary, June 12 and 16, 1668.

[5] Pepys's Diary, Feb. 28, 1660.

such times obstructions and quarrels were frequent, and the path was sometimes blocked up during a long time by carriers, neither of whom would break the way. It happened, almost every day, that coaches stuck fast, until a team of cattle could be procured from some neighboring farm to tug them out of the slough. But in bad seasons the traveler had to encounter inconveniences still more serious. Thoresby, who was in the habit of traveling between Leeds and the capital, has recorded, in his Diary, such a series of perils and disasters as might suffice for a journey to the Frozen Ocean or to the Desert of Sahara. On one occasion he learned that the floods were out between Ware and London, that passengers had to swim for their lives, and that a higgler had perished in the attempt to cross. In consequence of these tidings he turned out of the high-road, and was conducted across some meadows, where it was necessary for him to ride to the saddle skirts in water.[1] In the course of another journey he narrowly escaped being swept away by an inundation of the Trent. He was afterwards detained at Stamford four days, on account of the state of the roads, and then ventured to proceed only because fourteen members of the House of Commons, who were going up in a body to Parliament with guides and numerous attendants, took him into their company.[2] On the roads of Derbyshire, travelers were in constant fear for their necks, and were frequently compelled to alight and lead their beasts.[3] The great route through Wales to Holyhead was in such a state that, in 1685, a viceroy, going to Ireland, was five hours in traveling fourteen miles, from Saint Asaph to Conway. Between Conway and Beaumaris he was forced to walk great part of the way; and his lady was carried in a litter. His coach was, with much difficulty, and by the help of many hands, brought after him entire. In general, carriages were taken to pieces at Conway, and borne on the shoulders of stout Welsh peasants, to the Menai Straits.[4] In some parts of Kent and Sussex none but the strongest horses could, in winter, get through the bog, in which, at every step, they sank deep. The markets were often inaccessible during several months. It is said that the fruits of the earth were sometimes suffered to rot in one place, while in another place, distant only a few miles, the supply fell far short of the demand. The wheeled carriages were, in this district, generally pulled by oxen.[5] When Prince George of Denmark visited the stately mansion of Petworth in wet weather, he was six hours in going nine miles; and it was necessary that a body of sturdy hinds should be on each side of his coach, in order to prop it. Of the carriages which conveyed his retinue, several were upset and injured. A letter from one of the party has been preserved, in which the unfortunate courtier complains that, during fourteen hours, he never once alighted except when his coach was overturned or stuck fast in the mud.[6]

One chief cause of the badness of the roads seems to have been the defective state of the law. Every parish was bound to repair the highways which passed through it. The peasantry were forced to give their gratuitous labor six days in the year. If this was not sufficient, hired labor was employed, and the expense was met by a parochial rate. That a route connecting two great towns, which have a large and thriving trade with each other, should be maintained at the cost of the rural population scattered between them is obviously unjust; and this injustice was peculiarly glaring in the case of the great North road, which traversed very poor and thinly inhabited districts, and joined very rich and populous districts. Indeed it was not in the power of the parishes of Huntingdonshire to mend a highway worn by the constant traffic between the West Riding of Yorkshire and London. Soon after the Restoration this grievance attracted the notice of Parliament; and an act, the first of our many turnpike acts, was passed, imposing a small toll on travelers and goods, for the purpose of keeping some parts of this important line of

[1] Thoresby's Diary, May 17, 1695.

[2] *Ibid.*, Dec. 27, 1708.

[3] Tour in Derbyshire, by J. Browne, son of Sir Thomas Browne, 1662. Cotton's Angler, 1676.

[4] Correspondence of Henry, Earl of Clarendon, Dec. 30, 1685, Jan. 1, 1686.

[5] Postlethwaite's Dict., Roads; History of Hawkhurst, in the Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica.

[6] Annals of Queen Anne, 1703, Appendix, No. 3.

communication in good repair.[1] This innovation, however, excited many murmurs; and the other great avenues to the capital were long left under the old system. A change was at length effected, but not without much difficulty. For unjust and absurd taxation to which men are accustomed is often borne far more willingly than the most reasonable impost which is new. It was not till many toll bars had been violently pulled down, till the troops had in many districts been forced to act against the people, and till much blood had been shed, that a good system was introduced.[2] By slow degrees reason triumphed over prejudice; and our island is now crossed in every direction by near thirty thousand miles of turnpike road.

On the best highways heavy articles were, in the time of Charles the Second, generally conveyed from place to place by stage wagons. In the straw of these vehicles nestled a crowd of passengers, who could not afford to travel by coach or on horseback, and who were prevented by infirmity, or by the weight of their luggage, from going on foot. The expense of transmitting heavy goods in this way was enormous. From London to Birmingham the charge was seven pounds a ton; from London to Exeter, twelve pounds a ton.[3] This was about fifteen pence a ton for every mile, more by a third than was afterwards charged on turnpike roads, and fifteen times what is now demanded by railway companies. The cost of conveyance amounted to a prohibitory tax on many useful articles. Coal in particular was never seen except in the districts where it was produced, or in the districts to which it could be carried by sea, and was indeed always known in the south of England by the name of sea coal.

On by-roads, and generally throughout the country north of York and west of Exeter, goods were carried by long trains of pack horses. These strong and patient beasts, the breed of which is now extinct, were attended by a class of men who seem to have borne much resemblance to the Spanish muleteers. A traveler of humble condition often found it convenient to perform a journey mounted on a pack saddle between two baskets, under the care of these hardy guides. The expense of this mode of conveyance was small. But the caravan moved at a foot's pace; and in winter the cold was often insupportable.[4]

The rich commonly traveled in their own carriages, with at least four horses. Cotton, the facetious poet, attempted to go from London to the Peak with a single pair, but found at Saint Albans that the journey would be insupportably tedious, and altered his plan.[5] A coach and six is in our time never seen, except as part of some pageant. The frequent mention therefore of such equipages in old books is likely to mislead us. We attribute to magnificence what was really the effect of a very disagreeable necessity. People, in the time of Charles the Second, traveled with six horses, because with a smaller number there was great danger of sticking fast in the mire. Nor were even six horses always sufficient. Vanbrugh, in the succeeding generation, described with great humor the way in which a country gentleman, newly chosen a member of Parliament, went up to London. On that occasion all the exertions of six beasts, two of which had been taken from the plough, could not save the family coach from being embedded in a quagmire.

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[1] 15 Car. II. c. 1.

[2] The evils of the old system are strikingly set forth in many petitions which appear in the Commons' Journal of 1725–26. How fierce an opposition was offered to the new system may be learned from the Gentleman's Magazine of 1749.

[3] Postlethwaite's Dict., Roads.

[4] Loidis and Elmete; Marshall's Rural Economy of England. In 1739 Roderic Random came from Scotland to Newcastle on a packhorse.

[5] Cotton's Epistle to J. Bradshaw.

JOHN HENRY, CARDINAL NEWMAN (1801–1890)

That ferment of aspiration and unrest which produced in the nineteenth century so many forms of religious inquiry, the questioning faith of Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, Carlyle's turbid discontent with modern civilization and Ruskin's frantic anti-materialism, produced in John Henry Newman its most specialized and inspired searcher after spiritual grace,— in short, a religious genius. Newman was born in the City of London not far from the Bank. His father, a banker, was a man of cultivated tastes and is thought to have been of Jewish extraction. His mother came of a Huguenot family and Newman was instructed during his childhood in 'modified Calvinism.' As a youth he displayed singular intellectual restlessness combined with literary instinct and precocity. He was said to know the Bible by heart. His early passion for Scott provided his imagination with a background of medieval sympathies, and his memory with a piquant reference at a crucial point in the most close-knit controversy of his later life. In 1817 he entered Trinity College, Oxford, and won a scholarship at the end of his first year. The stirrings of the medieval movement were already beginning at Oxford when Newman became a fellow of Oriel College, its special home. After some terms at the law in London, Newman took orders in the Anglican church and by 1829 had become a tutor in Oriel and Vicar of St. Mary's. From contact with Hurrell Froude he soon grew deeply interested in the historic phases of Christianity; the new-old ideas of the Fathers 'came like music' to his 'inward ear,' and he conveyed them with burning effect into his clarion University Sermons at St. Mary's. In 1832, with Froude he saw Rome; he came near to death from cholera, paid devout visits to many ancient churches, wrote at Palermo, 'O, that thy creed were sound, thou Church of Rome,' and on shipboard composed in the twilight of Romanism, *Lead Kindly Light*, which one of his critics has termed 'the "March" of the tractarian movement.' The Sunday after Newman reached England, John Keble preached in his pulpit at St. Mary's the sermon on *National Apostasy*, which is held to have precipitated the Tractarian movement. To meet the rationalistic liberalism and irreligion which were threatening the church from without, two movements, broadly speaking, were advocated within it; — one, in sympathy with the temper of the age, toward more latitude of doctrine and more practical activity; the other, reactionary, toward a more zealous adherence to the forms, traditions and earlier sanctities of the church. It was this latter course that Newman and his friends espoused in the *Tracts for the Times*. Of this movement Newman was the most powerful writer. In seeking to establish the historical continuity of the English church, he gradually convinced himself of the authenticity of Romanism. He was not yet aware of the approaching position of his own mind, when he examined the subject of Apostolic Succession in his famous *Tract Ninety* (1841). The dangerousness of his position did not remain undetected by others and aroused the utmost violence of passion. Newman was compelled to leave Oxford and, soon after, it became known that he had entered the Roman fold. What followed is indescribable. Families were broken up. The entire religious world was in a state of almost tragic excitement. Newman alone preserved his calm and what was considered an ominous silence. For twenty years he addressed himself chiefly to his own parish and the men of his adopted faith. Finally, in 1864, a supreme opportunity came for him to address from a point of advantage the public which had reviled him. Charles Kingsley in a review of Froude's *History of England*, went out of his way to accuse 'Father Newman' of having justified the principle of dishonesty in the Roman priesthood. In the complicated correspondence, which was afterwards published in full, Newman had all the honors. With resistless logic and dexterity and the perfect poise and sincerity of a christian gentleman he left his assailant in an obvious position of reckless bigotry, wrong-headedness and untruth. Newman could now present to the English world the logic of his religious development, and this he did in his *Apologia pro Vita Sua* [Defense of his Life]. This is a telling presentation, full of acute personal interest, of the claims which an ancient and established religion can urge upon modern culture, and a justification of faith 'against the assaults of a fictitious enlightenment.' Upon the elevation of Pope Leo XIII, Newman was made, in 1879, a Cardinal of the Roman church.

Newman's prose style was a remarkable weapon in the hands of a controversialist. Pliant and strong, colloquial but never familiar, subtle and suave without the least insinuation of vulgar slyness, in command of all the nuances of delicate culture which it sparingly uses, it bends and thrusts like a beautifully tempered steel. Even should its matter cease to be of great interest, Newman's prose will always remain poignant for its classic purity and strength.

THE IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY

DISCOURSE VI

KNOWLEDGE VIEWED IN RELATION TO LEARNING

It were well if the English, like the Greek language, possessed some definite word to express, simply and generally, intellectual proficiency or perfection, such as 'health,' as used with reference to the animal frame, and 'virtue,' with reference to our moral nature. I am not able to find such a term; — talent, ability, genius, belong distinctly to the raw material, which is the subject-matter, not to that excellence which is the result of exercise and training. When we turn, indeed, to the particular kinds of intellectual perfection, words are forthcoming for our purpose, as, for instance, judgment, taste, and skill; yet even these belong, for the most part, to powers or habits bearing upon practice or upon art, and not to any perfect condition of the intellect, considered in itself. Wisdom, again, is certainly a more comprehensive word than any other, but it has a direct relation to conduct, and to human life. Knowledge, indeed, and science express purely intellectual ideas, but still not a state or quality of the intellect; for knowledge, in its ordinary sense, is but one of its circumstances, denoting a possession or a habit; and science has been appropriated to the subject-matter of the intellect, instead of belonging in English, as it ought to do, to the intellect itself. The consequence is that, on an occasion like this, many words are necessary, in order, first, to bring out and convey what surely is no difficult idea in itself,— that of the cultivation of the intellect as an end; next, in order to recommend what surely is no unreasonable object; and lastly, to describe and make the mind realize the particular perfection in which that object consists. Every one knows practically what are the constituents of health or of virtue; and every one recognizes health and virtue as ends to be pursued; it is otherwise with intellectual excellence, and this must be my excuse, if I seem to anyone to be bestowing a good deal of labor on a preliminary matter.

In default of a recognized term, I have called the perfection or virtue of the intellect by the name of philosophy, philosophical knowledge, enlargement of mind, or illumination; terms which are not uncommonly given to it by writers of this day: but, whatever name we bestow on it, it is, I believe, as a matter of history, the business of a university to make this intellectual culture its direct scope, or to employ itself in the education of the intellect,— just as the work of a hospital lies in healing the sick or wounded, of a riding or fencing school, or of a gymnasium, in exercising the limbs, of an almshouse, in aiding and solacing the old, of an orphanage, in protecting innocence, of a penitentiary, in restoring the guilty. I say, a university, taken in its bare idea, and before we view it as an instrument of the church, has this object and this mission; it contemplates neither moral impression nor mechanical production; it professes to exercise the mind neither in art nor in duty; its function is intellectual culture; here it may leave its scholars, and it has done its work when it has done as much as this. It educates the intellect to reason well in all matters, to reach out towards truth, and to grasp it.

This, I said in my foregoing discourse, was the object of a university, viewed in itself, and apart from the Catholic Church, or from the state, or from any other power which may use it; and I illustrated this in various ways. I said that the intellect must have an excellence of its own, for there was nothing which had not its specific good; that the word 'educate' would not be used of intellectual culture, as it is used, had not the intellect had an end of its own; that, had it not such an end, there would be no meaning in calling certain intellectual exercises 'liberal,' in contrast with 'useful,' as is commonly done; that the very notion of a philosophical temper implied it, for it threw us back upon research and system as ends in themselves, distinct from effects and works of any kind; that a philosophical scheme of knowledge, or system of sciences, could not, from the nature of the case, issue in any one definite art or pursuit, as its end; and that, on the other hand, the discovery and contemplation of truth, to which research and systematizing led, were surely sufficient ends, though noth-

ing beyond them were added, and that they had ever been accounted sufficient by mankind.

Here then I take up the subject; and, having determined that the cultivation of the intellect is an end distinct and sufficient in itself, and that, so far as words go, it is an enlargement or illumination, I proceed to inquire what this mental breadth, or power, or light, or philosophy consists in. A hospital heals a broken limb or cures a fever: what does an institution effect, which professes the health, not of the body, not of the soul, but of the intellect? What is this good, which in former times, as well as our own, has been found worth the notice, the appropriation of the Catholic Church?

I have then to investigate, in the discourses which follow, those qualities and characteristics of the intellect in which its cultivation issues or rather consists; and, with a view of assisting myself in this undertaking, I shall recur to certain questions which have already been touched upon. These questions are three: viz. the relation of intellectual culture, first, to *mere* knowledge; secondly, to *professional* knowledge; and thirdly, to *religious* knowledge. In other words, are *acquirements* and *attainments* the scope of a university education? or *expertness in particular arts* and *pursuits?* or *moral and religious proficiency?* or something besides these three? These questions I shall examine in succession, with the purpose I have mentioned; and I hope to be excused, if, in this anxious undertaking, I am led to repeat what, either in these discourses or elsewhere, I have already put upon paper. And first, of *mere knowledge,* or learning, and its connection with intellectual illumination or philosophy.

I suppose the *prima-facie* view which the public at large would take of a university, considering it as a place of education, is nothing more or less than a place for acquiring a great deal of knowledge on a great many subjects. Memory is one of the first developed of the mental faculties; a boy's business when he goes to school is to learn, that is, to store up things in his memory. For some years his intellect is little more than an instrument for taking in facts, or a receptacle for storing them; he welcomes them as fast as they come to him; he lives on what is without; he has his eyes ever about him; he has a lively susceptibility of impressions; he imbibes information of every kind; and little does he make his own in a true sense of the word, living rather upon his neighbors all around him. He has opinions, religious, political and literary, and, for a boy, is very positive in them and sure about them; but he gets them from his schoolfellows, or his masters, or his parents, as the case may be. Such as he is in his other relations, such also is he in his school exercises; his mind is observant, sharp, ready, retentive; he is almost passive in the acquisition of knowledge. I say this in no disparagement of the idea of a clever boy. Geography, chronology, history, language, natural history, he heaps up the matter of these studies as treasures for a future day. It is the seven years of plenty with him: he gathers in by handfuls, like the Egyptians, without counting; and though, as time goes on, there is exercise for his argumentative powers in the elements of mathematics, and for his taste in the poets and orators, still, while at school, or at least, till quite the last years of his time, he acquires, and little more; and when he is leaving for the university, he is mainly the creature of foreign influences and circumstances, and made up of accidents, homogeneous or not, as the case may be. Moreover, the moral habits, which are a boy's praise, encourage and assist this result; that is, diligence, assiduity, regularity, despatch, persevering application; for these are the direct conditions of acquisition, and naturally lead to it. Acquirements, again, are emphatically producible, and at a moment; they are a something to show, both for master and scholar; an audience, even though ignorant themselves of the subjects of an examination, can comprehend when questions are answered and when they are not. Here again is a reason why mental culture is in the minds of men identified with the acquisition of knowledge.

The same notion possesses the public mind, when it passes on from the thought of a school to that of a university: and with the best of reasons so far as this, that there is no true culture without ac-

quirements, and that philosophy presupposes knowledge. It requires a great deal of reading, or a wide range of information, to warrant us in putting forth our opinions on any serious subject; and without such learning the most original mind may be able indeed to dazzle, to amuse, to refute, to perplex, but not to come to any useful result or any trustworthy conclusion. There are indeed persons who profess a different view of the matter, and even act upon it. Every now and then you will find a person of vigorous or fertile mind, who relies upon his own resources, despises all former authors, and gives the world, with the utmost fearlessness, his views upon religion, or history, or any other popular subject. And his works may sell for a while; he may get a name in his day; but this will be all. His readers are sure to find on the long run that his doctrines are mere theories, and not the expression of facts, that they are chaff instead of bread, and then his popularity drops as suddenly as it rose.

Knowledge then is the indispensable condition of expansion of mind, and the instrument of attaining to it; this cannot be denied, it is ever to be insisted on; I begin with it as a first principle; however, the very truth of it carries men too far, and confirms to them the notion that it is the whole of the matter. A narrow mind is thought to be that which contains little knowledge; and an enlarged mind, that which holds a great deal; and what seems to put the matter beyond dispute is, the fact of the great number of studies which are pursued in a university, by its very profession. Lectures are given on every kind of subject; examinations are held; prizes awarded. There are moral, metaphysical, physical professors; professors of languages, of history, of mathematics, of experimental science. Lists of questions are published, wonderful for their range and depth, variety and difficulty; treatises are written, which carry upon their very face the evidence of extensive reading or multifarious information; what then is wanting for mental culture to a person of large reading and scientific attainments? what is grasp of mind but acquirement? where shall philosophical repose be found, but in the consciousness and enjoyment of large intellectual possessions?

And yet this notion is, I conceive, a mistake, and my present business is to show that it is one, and that the end of a liberal education is not mere knowledge, or knowledge considered in its *matter;* and I shall best attain my object, by actually setting down some cases, which will be generally granted to be instances of the process of enlightenment or enlargement of mind, and others which are not, and thus, by the comparison, you will be able to judge for yourselves, gentlemen, whether knowledge, that is, acquirement, is after all the real principle of the enlargement or whether that principle is not rather something beyond it.

For instance, let a person, whose experience has hitherto been confined to the more calm and unpretending scenery of these islands, whether here or in England, go for the first time into parts where physical nature puts on her wilder and more awful forms, whether at home or abroad, as into mountainous districts; or let one, who has ever lived in a quiet village, go for the first time to a great metropolis,— then I suppose he will have a sensation which perhaps he never had before. He has a feeling not in addition or increase of former feelings, but of something different in its nature. He will perhaps be borne forward, and find for a time that he has lost his bearings. He has made a certain progress, and he has a consciousness of mental enlargement; he does not stand where he did, he has a new center, and a range of thoughts to which he was before a stranger.

Again, the view of the heavens which the telescope opens upon us, if allowed to fill and possess the mind, may almost whirl it round and make it dizzy. It brings in a flood of ideas, and is rightly called an intellectual enlargement, what ever is meant by the term.

And so again, the sight of beasts of prey and other foreign animals, their strangeness, the originality (if I may use the term) of their forms and gestures and habits, and their variety and independence of each other, throw us out of ourselves into another creation, and as if under another Creator, if I may so express the temptation which may come on the mind. We seem to have new

faculties, or a new exercise for our faculties, by this addition to our knowledge; like a prisoner, who, having been accustomed to wear manacles or fetters, suddenly finds his arms and legs free.

Hence physical science generally, in all its departments, as bringing before us the exuberant riches and resources, yet the orderly course, of the universe, elevates and excites the student, and at first, I may say, almost takes away his breath, while in time it exercises a tranquilizing influence upon him.

Again the study of history is said to enlarge and enlighten the mind, and why? because, as I conceive, it gives it a power of judging of passing events and of all events, and a conscious superiority over them, which before it did not possess.

And in like manner, what is called seeing the world, entering into active life, going into society, traveling, gaining acquaintance with the various classes of the community, coming into contact with the principles and modes of thought of various parties, interests, and races, their views, aims, habits and manners, their religious creeds and forms of worship,—gaining experience how various yet how alike men are, how low-minded, how bad, how opposed, yet how confident in their opinions; all this exerts a perceptible influence upon the mind, which it is impossible to mistake, be it good or be it bad, and is popularly called its enlargement.

And then again, the first time the mind comes across the arguments and speculations of unbelievers, and feels what a novel light they cast upon what he has hitherto accounted sacred; and still more, if it gives in to them and embraces them, and throws off as so much prejudice what it has hitherto held, and, as if waking from a dream, begins to realize to its imagination that there is now no such thing as law and the transgression of law, that sin is a phantom, and punishment a bugbear, that it is free to sin, free to enjoy the world and the flesh; and still further, when it does enjoy them, and reflects that it may think and hold just what it will, that 'the world is all before it where to choose,' and what system to build up as its own private persuasion; when this torrent of wilful thoughts rushes over and inundates it, who will deny that the fruit of the tree of knowledge, or what the mind takes for knowledge, has made it one of the gods, with a sense of expansion and elevation,—an intoxication in reality, still, so far as the subjective state of the mind goes, an illumination? Hence the fanaticism of individuals or nations, who suddenly cast off their Maker. Their eyes are opened; and, like the judgment-stricken king in the tragedy, they see two suns, and a magic universe, out of which they look back upon their former state of faith and innocence with a sort of contempt and indignation, as if they were then but fools, and the dupes of imposture.

On the other hand, religion has its own enlargement, and an enlargement, not of tumult, but of peace. It is often remarked of uneducated persons, who have hitherto thought little of the unseen world, that, on their turning to God, looking into themselves, regulating their hearts, reforming their conduct, and meditating on death and judgment, heaven and hell, they seem to become, in point of intellect, different beings from what they were. Before, they took things as they came, and thought no more of one thing than another. But now every event has a meaning; they have their own estimate of whatever happens to them; they are mindful of times and seasons, and compare the present with the past; and the world, no longer dull, monotonous, unprofitable, and hopeless, is a various and complicated drama, with parts and an object, and an awful moral.

Now from these instances, to which many more might be added, it is plain, first, that the communication of knowledge certainly is either a condition or the means of that sense of enlargement, or enlightenment of which at this day we hear so much in certain quarters: this cannot be denied; but next, it is equally plain, that such communication is not the whole of the process. The enlargement consists, not merely in the passive reception into the mind of a number of ideas hitherto unknown to it, but in the mind's energetic and simultaneous action upon and towards and among those new ideas, which are rushing in upon it. It is the action of a formative power, reducing to order and meaning the matter of our

acquirements; it is a making the objects of our knowledge subjectively our own, or, to use a familiar word, it is a digestion of what we receive, into the substance of our previous state of thought; and without this no enlargement is said to follow. There is no enlargement, unless there be a comparison of ideas one with another, as they come before the mind, and a systematizing of them. We feel our minds to be growing and expanding *then*, when we not only learn, but refer what we learn to what we know already. It is not the mere addition to our knowledge that is the illumination; but the locomotion, the movement onwards, of that mental center, to which both what we know, and what we are learning, the accumulating mass of our acquirements, gravitates. And therefore a truly great intellect, and recognized to be such by the common opinion of mankind, such as the intellect of Aristotle, or of St. Thomas, or of Newton, or of Goethe (I purposely take instances within and without the Catholic pale, when I would speak of the intellect as such), is one which takes a connected view of old and new, past and present, far and near, and which has an insight into the influence of all these one on another; without which there is no whole and no center. It possesses the knowledge, not only of things, but also of their mutual and true relations; knowledge, not merely considered as acquirement but as philosophy.

Accordingly, when this analytical, distributive, harmonizing process is away, the mind experiences no enlargement, and is not reckoned as enlightened or comprehensive, whatever it may add to its knowledge. For instance, a great memory, as I have already said, does not make a philosopher, any more than a dictionary can be called a grammar. There are men who embrace in their minds a vast multitude of ideas, but with little sensibility about their real relations towards each other. These may be antiquarians, annalists, naturalists; they may be learned in the law; they may be versed in statistics; they are most useful in their own place; I should shrink from speaking disrespectfully of them; still, there is nothing in such attainments to guarantee the absence of narrowness of mind. If they are nothing more than well-read men, or men of information, they have not what specially deserves the name of culture of mind, or fulfils the type of liberal education.

In like manner, we sometimes fall in with persons who have seen much of the world, and of the men who, in their day, have played a conspicuous part in it, but who generalize nothing, and have no observation, in the true sense of the word. They abound in information in detail, curious and entertaining, about men and things; and, having lived under the influence of no very clear or settled principles, religious or political, they speak of every one and every thing, only as so many phenomena, which are complete in themselves, and lead to nothing, not discussing them, or teaching any truth, or instructing the hearer, but simply talking. No one would say that these persons, well informed as they are, had attained to any great culture of intellect or to philosophy.

The case is the same still more strikingly where the persons in question are beyond dispute men of inferior powers and deficient education. Perhaps they have been much in foreign countries, and they receive, in a passive, otiose, unfruitful way, the various facts which are forced upon them there. Seafaring men, for example, range from one end of the earth to the other; but the multiplicity of external objects, which they have encountered, forms no symmetrical and consistent picture upon their imagination; they see the tapestry of human life, as it were on the wrong side, and it tells no story. They sleep, and they rise up, and they find themselves, now in Europe, now in Asia; they see visions of great cities and wild regions; they are in the marts of commerce, or amid the islands of the South; they gaze on Pompey's Pillar, or on the Andes; and nothing which meets them carries them forward or backward, to any idea beyond itself. Nothing has a drift or relation; nothing has a history or a promise. Every thing stands by itself, and comes and goes in its turn, like the shifting scenes of a show, which leave the spectator where he was. Perhaps you are near such a man on a particular occasion, and expect him to be shocked or perplexed at something which occurs; but one thing

is much the same to him as another, or, if he is perplexed, it is as not knowing what to say, whether it is right to admire, or to ridicule, or to disapprove, while conscious that some expression of opinion is expected from him; for in fact he has no standard of judgment at all, and no landmarks to guide him to a conclusion. Such is mere acquisition, and, I repeat, no one would dream of calling it philosophy.

Instances, such as these, confirm, by the contrast, the conclusion I have already drawn from those which preceded them. That only is true enlargement of mind which is the power of viewing many things at once as one whole, of referring them severally to their true place in the universal system, of understanding their respective values, and determining their mutual dependence. Thus is that form of universal knowledge, of which I have on a former occasion spoken, set up in the individual intellect, and constitutes its perfection. Possessed of this real illumination, the mind never views any part of the extended subject-matter of knowledge without recollecting that it is but a part, or without the associations which spring from this recollection. It makes everything in some sort lead to everything else; it would communicate the image of the whole to every separate portion, till that whole becomes in imagination like a spirit, everywhere pervading and penetrating its component parts, and giving them one definite meaning. Just as our bodily organs, when mentioned, recall their function in the body, as the word 'creation' suggests the Creator, and 'subjects' a sovereign, so, in the mind of the philosopher, as we are abstractedly conceiving of him, the elements of the physical and moral world, sciences, arts, pursuits, ranks, offices, events, opinions, individualities, are all viewed as one, with correlative functions, and as gradually by successive combinations converging, one and all, to the true center.

To have even a portion of this illuminative reason and true philosophy is the highest state to which nature can aspire, in the way of intellect; it puts the mind above the influences of chance and necessity, above anxiety, suspense, unsettlement, and superstition, which is the lot of the many. Men, whose minds are possessed with some one object, take exaggerated views of its importance, are feverish in the pursuit of it, make it the measure of things which are utterly foreign to it, and are startled and despond if it happens to fail them. They are ever in alarm or in transport. Those on the other hand who have no object or principle whatever to hold by, lose their way every step they take. They are thrown out, and do not know what to think or say, at every fresh juncture; they have no view of persons, or occurrences, or facts, which come suddenly upon them, and they hang upon the opinion of others for want of internal resources. But the intellect, which has been disciplined to the perfection of its powers, which knows, and thinks while it knows, which has learned to leaven the dense mass of facts and events with the elastic force of reason, such an intellect cannot be partial, cannot be exclusive, cannot be impetuous, cannot be at a loss, cannot but be patient, collected, and majestically calm, because it discerns the end in every beginning, the origin in every end, the law in every interruption, the limit in each delay; because it ever knows where it stands, and how its path lies from one point to another. It is the τετράγωνος [four-square] of the Peripatetic, and has the *nil admirari* [to be moved by nothing] of the Stoic,—

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes, et inexorabile fatum
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.

[Happy is he who has come to know the sequences of things, and is thus above all fear and the dread march of fate and the roar of greedy Acheron.]

There are men who, when in difficulties, originate at the moment vast ideas or dazzling projects; who, under the influence of excitement, are able to cast a light, almost as if from inspiration, on a subject or course of action which comes before them; who have a sudden presence of mind equal to any emergency, rising with the occasion, and an undaunted magnanimous bearing, and an energy and keenness which is but made intense by opposition. This is genius, this is hero-

ism; it is the exhibition of a natural gift, which no culture can teach, at which no institution can aim: here, on the contrary, we are concerned, not with mere nature, but with training and teaching. That perfection of the intellect, which is the result of education, and its *beau ideal*, to be imparted to individuals in their respective measures, is the clear, calm, accurate vision and comprehension of all things, as far as the finite mind can embrace them, each in its place, and with its own characteristics upon it. It is almost prophetic from its knowledge of history; it is almost heart-searching from its knowledge of human nature; it has almost supernatural charity from its freedom from littleness and prejudice; it has almost the repose of faith, because nothing can startle it; it has almost the beauty and harmony of heavenly contemplation, so intimate is it with the eternal order of things and the music of the spheres.

And now, if I may take for granted that the true and adequate end of intellectual training and of a university is not learning or acquirement, but rather, is thought or reason exercised upon knowledge, or what may be called philosophy, I shall be in a position to explain the various mistakes which at the present day beset the subject of university education.

I say then, if we would improve the intellect, first of all, we must ascend; we cannot gain real knowledge on a level; we must generalize, we must reduce to method, we must have a grasp of principles, and group and shape our acquisitions by means of them. It matters not whether our field of operation be wide or limited; in every case, to command it, is to mount above it. Who has not felt the irritation of mind and impatience created by a deep, rich country, visited for the first time, with winding lanes, and high hedges, and green steeps, and tangled woods, and every thing smiling indeed, but in a maze? The same feeling comes upon us in a strange city, where we have no map of its streets. Hence you hear of practised travelers, when they first come into a place, mounting some high hill or church tower, by way of reconnoitering its neighborhood. In like manner, you must be above your knowledge, not under it, or it will oppress you: and the more you have of it, the greater will be the load. The learning of a Salmasius or a Burman, unless you are its master, will be your tyrant. *Imperat aut servit* [it rules or it serves]; if you can wield it with a strong arm, it is a great weapon; otherwise,

> Vis consili expers
> Mole ruit suâ.

[Brute force without intelligence falls by its own weight.]

You will be overwhelmed, like Tarpeia, by the heavy wealth which you have exacted from tributary generations.

Instances abound: there are authors who are as pointless as they are inexhaustible in their literary resources. They measure knowledge by bulk, as it lies in the rude block, without symmetry, without design. How many commentators are there on the classics, how many on Holy Scripture, from whom we rise up, wondering at the learning which has passed before us, and wondering why it passed! How many writers are there of Ecclesiastical history, such as Mosheim or Du Pin, who, breaking up their subject into details, destroy its life, and defraud us of the whole by their anxiety about the parts! The sermons, again, of the English divines in the seventeenth century, how often are they mere repertories of miscellaneous and officious learning! Of course Catholics also may read without thinking; and in their case, equally as with Protestants, it holds good, that such knowledge is unworthy of the name, knowledge which they have not thought through, and thought out. Such readers are only possessed by their knowledge, not possessed of it; nay, in matter of fact they are often even carried away by it, without any volition of their own. Recollect, the memory can tyrannize, as well as the imagination. Derangement, I believe, has been considered as a loss of control over the sequence of ideas. The mind, once set in motion, is henceforth deprived of the power of initiation, and becomes the victim of a train of associations, one thought suggesting another, in the way of cause and effect, as if by a mechanical process, or some physical necessity. No one, who has had experience of men of studious habits, but must recognize the existence of a parallel

phenomenon in the case of those who have over-stimulated the memory. In such persons reason acts almost as feebly and as impotently as in the madman; once fairly started on any subject whatever, they have no power of self-control; they passively endure the succession of impulses which are evolved out of the original exciting cause; they are passed on from one idea to another and go steadily forward, plodding along one line of thought in spite of the amplest concessions of the hearer, or wandering from it in endless digression in spite of his remonstrances. Now, if, as is very certain, no one would envy the madman the glow and originality of his conceptions, why must we extol the cultivation of that intellect, which is the prey, not indeed of barren fancies but of barren facts, of random intrusions from without, though not of morbid imaginations from within? And in thus speaking, I am not denying that a strong and ready memory is in itself a real treasure; I am not disparaging a well-stored mind, though it be nothing besides, provided it be sober, any more than I would despise a bookseller's shop: — it is of great value to others, even when not so to the owner. Nor am I banishing, far from it, the possessors of deep and multifarious learning from my ideal University; they adorn it in the eyes of men; I do but say that they constitute no type of the results at which it aims; that it is no great gain to the intellect to have enlarged the memory at the expense of faculties which are indisputably higher.

Nor indeed am I supposing that there is any great danger, at least in this day, of over-education; the danger is on the other side. I will tell you, gentlemen, what has been the practical error of the last twenty years,— not to load the memory of the student with a mass of undigested knowledge, but to force upon him so much that he has rejected all. It has been the error of distracting and enfeebling the mind by an unmeaning profusion of subjects; of implying that a smattering in a dozen branches of study is not shallowness, which it really is, but enlargement which it is not; of considering an acquaintance with the learned names of things and persons and the possession of clever duodecimos, and attendance on eloquent lecturers, and membership with scientific institutions, and the sight of the experiments of a platform and the specimens of a museum, that all this was not dissipation of mind, but progress. All things now are to be learned at once, not first one thing, then another, not one well, but many badly. Learning is to be without exertion, without attention, without toil; without grounding, without advance, without finishing. There is to be nothing individual in it; and this, forsooth, is the wonder of the age. What the steam engine does with matter, the printing press is to do with the mind; it is to act mechanically, and the population is to be passively, almost unconsciously enlightened, by the mere multiplication and dissemination of volumes. Whether it be the school boy, or the school girl, or the youth at college, or the mechanic in the town, or the politician in the senate, all have been the victims in one way or other of this most preposterous and pernicious of delusions. Wise men have lifted up their voices in vain; and at length, lest their own institutions should be outshone and should disappear in the folly of the hour, they have been obliged, as far as they could with a good conscience, to humor a spirit which they could not withstand, and make temporizing concessions at which they could not but inwardly smile.

It must not be supposed that, because I so speak, therefore I have some sort of fear of the education of the people: on the contrary, the more education they have, the better, so that it is really education. Nor am I an enemy to the cheap publication of scientific and literary works, which is now in vogue: on the contrary, I consider it a great advantage, convenience, and gain; that is, to those to whom education has given a capacity for using them. Further, I consider such innocent recreations as science and literature are able to furnish will be a very fit occupation of the thoughts and the leisure of young persons, and may be made the means of keeping them from bad employments and bad companions. Moreover, as to that superficial acquaintance with chemistry, and geology, and astronomy, and political economy, and modern history, and biography, and other branches of knowledge, which periodical

literature and occasional lectures and scientific institutions diffuse through the community, I think it a graceful accomplishment, and a suitable, nay, in this day a necessary accomplishment, in the case of educated men. Nor, lastly, am I disparaging or discouraging the thorough acquisition of any one of these studies, or denying that, as far as it goes, such thorough acquisition is a real education of the mind. All I say is, call things by their right names, and do not confuse together ideas which are essentially different. A thorough knowledge of one science and a superficial acquaintance with many, are not the same thing; a smattering of a hundred things or a memory for detail, is not a philosophical or comprehensive view. Recreations are not education; accomplishments are not education. Do not say, the people must be educated, when, after all, you only mean, amused, refreshed, soothed, put into good spirits and good humor, or kept from vicious excesses. I do not say that such amusements, such occupations of mind, are not a great gain; but they are not education. You may as well call drawing and fencing education as a general knowledge of botany or conchology. Stuffing birds or playing stringed instruments is an elegant pastime, and a resource to the idle, but it is not education; it does not form or cultivate the intellect. Education is a high word; it is the preparation for knowledge, and it is the imparting of knowledge in proportion to that preparation. We require intellectual eyes to know withal, as bodily eyes for sight. We need both objects and organs intellectual; we cannot gain them without setting about it; we cannot gain them in our sleep, or by haphazard. The best telescope does not dispense with eyes; the printing press or the lecture room will assist us greatly, but we must be true to ourselves, we must be parties in the work. A university is, according to the usual designation, an alma mater, knowing her children one by one, not a foundry, or a mint, or a treadmill.

I protest to you, gentlemen, that if I had to choose between a so-called university, which dispensed with residence and tutorial superintendence, and gave its degrees to any person who passed an examination in a wide range of subjects, and a university which had no professors or examinations at all, but merely brought a number of young men together for three or four years, and then sent them away as the University of Oxford is said to have done some sixty years since, if I were asked which of these two methods was the better discipline of the intellect, — mind, I do not say which is morally the better, for it is plain that compulsory study must be a good and idleness an intolerable mischief,— but if I must demine which of the two courses was the more successful in training, molding, enlarging the mind, which sent out men the more fitted for their secular duties, which produced better public men, men of the world, men whose names would descend to posterity, I have no hesitation in giving the preference to that university which did nothing, over that which exacted of its members an acquaintance with every science under the sun. And, paradox as this may seem, still if results be the test of systems, the influence of the public schools and colleges of England, in the course of the last century, at least will bear out one side of the contrast as I have drawn it. What would come, on the other hand, of the ideal systems of education which have fascinated the imagination of this age, could they ever take effect, and whether they would not produce a generation frivolous, narrow-minded, and resourceless, intellectually considered, is a fair subject for debate; but so far is certain, that the universities and scholastic establishments, to which I refer, and which did little more than bring together first boys and then youths in large numbers, these institutions, with miserable deformities on the side of morals, with a hollow profession of Christianity, and a heathen code of ethics,— I say, at least they can boast of a succession of heroes and statesmen, of literary men and philosophers, of men conspicuous for great natural virtues, for habits of business, for knowledge of life, for practical judgment, for cultivated tastes, for accomplishments, who have made England what it is,— able to subdue the earth, able to domineer over Catholics.

How is this to be explained? I suppose as follows: When a multitude of young men, keen, open-hearted, sympa-

thetic, and observant, as young men are, come together and freely mix with each other, they are sure to learn one from another, even if there be no one to teach them; the conversation of all is a series of lectures to each, and they gain for themselves new ideas and views, fresh matter of thought, and distinct principles for judging and acting, day by day. An infant has to learn the meaning of the information which its senses convey to it, and this seems to be its employment. It fancies all that the eye presents to it to be close to it, till it actually learns the contrary, and thus by practice does it ascertain the relations and uses of those first elements of knowledge which are necessary for its animal existence. A parallel teaching is necessary for our social being, and it is secured by a large school or a college; and this effect may be fairly called in its own department an enlargement of mind. It is seeing the world on a small field with little trouble; for the pupils or students come from very different places, and with widely different notions, and there is much to generalize, much to adjust, much to eliminate, there are inter-relations to be defined, and conventional rules to be established, in the process, by which the whole assemblage is molded together, and gains one tone and one character.

Let it be clearly understood, I repeat it, that I am not taking into account moral or religious considerations; I am but saying that that youthful community will constitute a whole, it will embody a specific idea, it will represent a doctrine, it will administer a code of conduct, and it will furnish principles of thought and action. It will give birth to a living teaching, which in course of time will take the shape of a self-perpetuating tradition, or a *genius loci,* as it is sometimes called; which haunts the home where it has been born, and which imbues and forms more or less, and one by one, every individual who is successively brought under its shadow. Thus it is that, independent of direct instruction on the part of superiors, there is a sort of self-education in the academic institutions of protestant England; a characteristic tone of thought, a recognized standard of judgment is found in them, which as developed in the individual who is submitted to it, becomes a twofold source of strength to him, both from the distinct stamp it impresses on his mind, and from the bond of union which it creates between him and others,—effects which are shared by the authorities of the place, for they themselves have been educated in it, and at all times are exposed to the influence of its ethical atmosphere. Here then is a real teaching, whatever be its standards and principles, true or false; and it at least tends towards cultivation of the intellect; it at least recognizes that knowledge is something more than a sort of passive reception of scraps and details; it is a something, and it does a something, which never will issue from the most strenuous efforts of a set of teachers, with no mutual sympathies and no intercommunion, of a set of examiners with no opinions which they dare profess, and with no common principles, who are teaching or questioning a set of youths who do not know them, and do not know each other, on a large number of subjects, different in kind, and connected by no wide philosophy, three times a week, or three times a year, or once in three years, in chill lecture-rooms or on a pompous anniversary.

Nay, self-education in any shape, in the most restricted sense, is preferable to a system of teaching which, professing so much, really does so little for the mind. Shut your college gates against the votary of knowledge, throw him back upon the searchings and the efforts of his own mind; he will gain by being spared an entrance into your babel. Few indeed there are who can dispense with the stimulus and support of instructors, or will do anything at all, if left to themselves. And fewer still (though such great minds are to be found), who will not, from such unassisted attempts, contract a self-reliance and a self-esteem, which are not only moral evils, but serious hindrances to the attainment of truth. And next to none, perhaps, or none, who will not be reminded from time to time of the disadvantage under which they lie, by their imperfect grounding, by the breaks, deficiencies, and irregularities of their knowledge, by the eccentricity of opinion and the confusion of principle which they exhibit. They will be too often ignorant of what every one

knows and takes for granted, of that multitude of small truths which fall upon the mind like dust, impalpable and ever accumulating; they may be unable to converse, they may argue perversely, they may pride themselves on their worst paradoxes or their grossest truisms, they may be full of their own mode of viewing things, unwilling to be put out of their way, slow to enter into the minds of others; — but, with these and whatever other liabilities upon their heads, they are likely to have more thought, more mind, more philosophy, more true enlargement, than those earnest but ill-used persons, who are forced to load their minds with a score of subjects against an examination, who have too much on their hands to indulge themselves in thinking or investigation, who devour premise and conclusion together with indiscriminate greediness, who hold whole sciences on faith, and commit demonstrations to memory, and who too often, as might be expected, when their period of education is passed, throw up all they have learned in disgust, having gained nothing really by their anxious labors, except perhaps the habit of application.

Yet such is the better specimen of the fruit of that ambitious system which has of late years been making way among us: for its result on ordinary minds, and on the common run of students, is less satisfactory still; they leave their place of education simply dissipated and relaxed by the multiplicity of subjects, which they have never really mastered, and so shallow as not even to know their shallowness. How much better, I say, is it for the active and thoughtful intellect, where such is to be found, to eschew the college and the university altogether, than to submitt to a drudgery so ignoble, a mockery so contumelious! How much more profitable for the independent mind, after the mere rudiments of education, to range through a library at random, taking down books as they meet him, and pursuing the trains of thought which his mother wit suggests! How much healthier to wander into the fields, and there with the exiled prince to find 'tongues in the trees, books in the running brooks!' How much more genuine an education is that of the poor boy in the poem[1] — a poem, whether in conception or in execution, one of the most touching in our language — who, not in the wide world, but ranging day by day around his widowed mother's home, 'a dexterous gleaner' in a narrow field and with only such slender outfit

> As the village school and books a few
> Supplied,

contrived from the beach, and the quay, and the fisher's boat, and the inn's fireside, and the tradesman's shop, and the shepherd's walk, and the smuggler's hut, and the mossy moor, and the screaming gulls, and the restless waves, to fashion for himself a philosophy and a poetry of his own!

But in a large subject, I am exceeding my necessary limits. Gentlemen, I must conclude abruptly; and postpone any summing up of my argument, should that be necessary, to another day.

(1852)

[1] Crabbe's *Tales of the Hall*. This poem, let me say, I read on its first publication, above thirty years ago, with extreme delight, and have never lost my love of it; and on taking it up lately, found I was even more touched by it than heretofore. A work which can please in youth and age, seems to fulfil (in logical language) the *accidental definition* of a classic. (A further course of twenty years has past, and I bear the same witness in favor of this poem.)

THOMAS CARLYLE (1795–1881)

Early struggles and privations, followed by acute dyspepsia, embittered Carlyle's temper The son of a Scottish stone-mason, he walked eighty miles from his native village of Ecclefechan to Edinburgh to study at the university and prepare himself for the ministry. This latter purpose was soon abandoned on account of unsettled religious convictions; after graduating he earned a scanty living by teaching and tried in vain to obtain various professorships. Having married Jane Baillie Welsh, a woman of brilliant wit and some property, he retired with her to the manor house of Craigenputtock, where for six years he studied German literature and philosophy and wrote essays for the reviews, among them his first great work, *Sartor Resartus*. Under the disguise of a translation from the papers of a German professor, it is an imaginative account of his own school and college experiences, his falling in love with Margaret Gordon of Prince Edward Island, who returned to that colony as wife of the governor, his spiritual and intellectual struggles, and his philosophy of life. It had just been published in *Fraser's Magazine*, when, in 1834, the Carlyles determined to risk their little all, and leave Craigenputtock for London. Carlyle chose a house in Cheyne Row, Chelsea, and kept it for the rest of his life. The peculiar style of *Sartor* did not commend it to the public. Fraser wrote that it excited 'universal disapprobation,' and several subscribers to the magazine refused to take it any longer. Carlyle was more fortunate in his next subject, 'The French Revolution,' suggested by John Stuart Mill. When the manuscript of the first volume was finished, Carlyle lent it to Mill to read; Mill lent it in turn to a friend, whose housemaid found it on the table one morning and lit the fire with it. Carlyle was in despair at the loss of so much labor; he felt incapable of doing the work over again, and spent three months in reading Marryat's novels before he could bend his energies to the unwelcome task. The book was completed in 1837, and at once won the favor of both critics and public. He was also successful about this time as a lecturer, and his wife said that the public had evidently made up its mind that 'Carlyle was worth keeping alive at a moderate rate.' One of the courses he gave, that 'On Heroes, Hero-worship, and the Heroic in History,' when published in 1841 became one of his most popular works; it contains in the shortest and simplest form Carlyle's favorite doctrine that the history of the world is at bottom the history of its great men. After setting forth his ideas on social and political questions in *Chartism* and *Past and Present*, he returned to the study of history, and his *Life and Letters of Oliver Cromwell* made a remarkable change in the current estimate of the great Protector. The labor of a dozen years is contained in his last historical work, *Frederick the Great* (published 1858–65). The year after this was completed, Mrs. Carlyle died suddenly in her carriage from the shock caused by an accident to her pet dog, which was run over when she was driving one afternoon in Hyde Park. Carlyle in heartbroken remorse determined to tell the public not only his wife's virtues but his own unkindness to her. The publication after his death of the record of their unhappy married life injured his reputation, and led to a controversy which has not yet ended, the discretion and even the good faith of J. A. Froude, who edited the papers, being attacked by Carlyle's admirers.

PAST AND PRESENT

BOOK III

CHAPTER X

PLUGSON OF UNDERSHOT

One thing I do know: Never, on this Earth, was the relation of man to man long carried on by Cash-payment alone. If, at any time, a philosophy of Laissez-faire, Competition and Supply-and-demand, start up as the exponent of human relations, expect that it will soon end.

Such philosophies will arise: for man's philosophies are usually the 'supplement of his practice;' some ornamental Logic-varnish, some outer skin of Articulate intelligence, with which he strives to render his dumb Instinctive Doings presentable when they are done. Such philosophies will arise; be preached

as Mammon-Gospels, the ultimate Evangel of the World; be believed with what is called belief, with much superficial bluster, and a kind of shallow satisfaction real in its way; — but they are ominous gospels! They are the sure and even swift, forerunner of great changes. Expect that the old System of Society is done, is dying and fallen into dotage, when it begins to rave in that fashion. Most Systems that I have watched the death of, for the last three thousand years, have gone just so. The Ideal, the True and Noble that was in them having faded out, and nothing now remaining but naked Egoism, vulturous Greediness, they cannot live; they are bound and inexorably ordained by the oldest Destinies, Mothers of the Universe, to die. Curious enough; they thereupon, as I have pretty generally noticed, devised some light comfortable kind of 'wine-and-walnuts philosophy' for themselves, this of Supply-and-demand or another; and keep saying, during hours of mastication and rumination, which they call hours of meditation: 'Soul, take thy ease; it is all *well* that thou art a vulture-soul;' — and pangs of dissolution come upon them, oftenest before they are aware!

Cash-payment never was, or could except for a few years be, the union-bond of man to man. Cash never yet paid one man fully his deserts to another; nor could it, nor can it, now or henceforth to the end of the world. I invite his Grace of Castle-Rackrent to reflect on this; — does he think that a Land Aristocracy when it becomes a Land Auctioneership can have long to live? Or that Sliding-scales will increase the vital stamina of it? The indomitable Plugson too, of the respected Firm of Plugson, Hunks and Company, in St. Dolly Undershot, is invited to reflect on this; for to him also it will be new, perhaps even newer. Bookkeeping by double entry is admirable, and records several things in an exact manner. But the Mother-Destinies also keep their Tablets; in Heaven's Chancery also there goes on a recording; and things, as my Moslem friends say, are 'written on the iron leaf.'

Your Grace and Plugson, it is like, go to Church occasionally: did you never in vacant moments, with perhaps a dull parson droning to you, glance into your New Testament, and the cash account stated four times over, by a kind of quadruple entry,— in the Four Gospels there? I consider that a cash-account, and balance-statement of work done and wages paid, worth attending to. Precisely *such*, though on a smaller scale, go on at all moments under this Sun; and the statement and balance of them in the Plugson Ledgers and on the Tablets of Heaven's Chancery are discrepant exceedingly; — which ought really to teach, and to have long since taught, an indomitable common-sense Plugson of Undershot, much more an unattackable *un*common-sense Grace of Rackrent, a thing or two! — In brief, we shall have to dismiss the Cash-Gospel rigorously into its own place: we shall have to know, on the threshold, that either there is some infinitely deeper Gospel, subsidiary, explanatory and daily and hourly corrective, to the Cash one; or else that the Cash one itself and all others are fast traveling!

For all human things do require to have an Ideal in them; to have some Soul in them, as we said, were it only to keep the Body unputrefied. And wonderful it is to see how the Ideal or Soul, place it in what ugliest Body you may, will irradiate said Body with its own nobleness; will gradually, incessantly, mold, modify, new-form or reform said ugliest Body, and make it at last beautiful, and to a certain degree divine! — Oh, if you could dethrone that Brute-god Mammon, and put a Spirit-god in his place! One way or other, he must and will have to be dethroned.

Fighting, for example, as I often say to myself, Fighting with steel murder-tools is surely a much uglier operation than Working, take it how you will. Yet even of Fighting, in religious Abbot Samson's days, see what a Feudalism there had grown,— a 'glorious Chivalry,' much besung down to the present day. Was not that one of the 'impossiblest' things? Under the sky is no uglier spectacle than two men with clenched teeth, and hell-fire eyes, hacking one another's flesh, converting precious living bodies, and priceless liv-

ing souls, into nameless masses of putrescence, useful only for turnip-manure. How did a Chivalry ever come out of that; how anything that was not hideous, scandalous, infernal? It will be a question worth considering by and by.

I remark, for the present, only two things: first, that the Fighting itself was not, as we rashly suppose it, a Fighting without cause, but more or less with cause. Man is created to fight; he is perhaps best of all definable as a born soldier; his life 'a battle and a march,' under the right General. It is forever indispensable for a man to fight: now with Necessity, with Barrenness, Scarcity, with Puddles, Bogs, tangled Forests, unkempt Cotton; — now also with the hallucinations of his poor fellow Men. Hallucinatory visions rise in the head of my poor fellow man; make him claim over me rights which are not his. All fighting, as we noticed long ago, is the dusty conflict of strengths, each thinking itself the strongest, or, in other words, the justest; — of Mights which do in the long-run, and forever will in this just Universe in the long-run, mean Rights. In conflict the perishable part of them, beaten sufficiently, flies off into dust; this process ended, appears the imperishable, the true and exact.

And now let us remark a second thing: how, in these baleful operations, a noble devout-hearted Chevalier will comport himself, and an ignoble godless Bucanier and Chactaw Indian. Victory is the aim of each. But deep in the heart of the noble man it lies forever legible, that as an Invisible Just God made him, so will and must God's Justice and this only, were it never so invisible, ultimately prosper in all controversies and enterprises and battles whatsoever. What an Influence; ever-present,— like a Soul in the rudest Caliban of a body; like a ray of Heaven, and illuminative creative *Fiat-Lux,* in the wastest terrestrial Chaos! Blessed divine Influence, traceable even in the horror of Battlefields and garments rolled in blood: how it ennobles even the Battlefield; and, in place of a Chactaw Massacre, makes it a Field of Honor! A Battlefield too, is great. Considered well, it is a kind of Quintessence of Labor; Labor distilled into its utmost concentration; the significance of years of it compressed into an hour. Here too thou shalt be strong, and not in muscle only, if thou wouldst prevail. Here too thou shalt be strong of heart, noble of soul; thou shalt dread no pain or death, thou shalt not love ease or life; in rage, thou shalt remember mercy, justice; — thou shalt be a Knight and not a Chactaw, if thou wouldst prevail! It is the rule of all battles, against hallucinating fellow Men, against unkempt Cotton, or whatsoever battles they may be, which a man in this world has to fight.

Howel Davies dyes the West-Indian Seas with blood, piles his decks with plunder; approves himself the expertest Seaman, the daringest Seafighter: but he gains no lasting victory, lasting victory is not possible for him. Not, had he fleets larger than the combined British Navy all united with him in bucanering. He, once for all, cannot prosper in his duel. He strikes down his man: yes; but his man, or his man's representative, has no notion to lie struck down; neither, though slain ten times, will he keep so lying; — nor has the Universe any notion to keep him so lying! On the contrary, the Universe and he have, at all moments, all manner of motives to start up again, and desperately fight again. Your Napoleon is flung out, at last, to St. Helena; the latter end of him sternly compensating the beginning. The Bucanier strikes down a man, a hundred or a million men: but what profits it? He has one enemy never to be struck down; nay two enemies: Mankind and the Maker of Men. On the great scale or on the small, in fighting of men or fighting of difficulties, I will not embark my venture with Howel Davies: it is not the Bucanier, it is the Hero only that can gain victory, that can do more than *seem* to succeed. These things will deserve meditating; for they apply to all battle and soldiership, all struggle and effort whatsoever in this Fight of Life. It is a poor Gospel, Cash-Gospel or whatever name it have, that does not, with clear tone, uncontradictable, carrying conviction to all hearts, forever keep men in mind of these things.

Unhappily, my indomitable friend Plugson of Undershot has, in a great degree, forgotten them; — as, alas, all the

world has; as, alas, our very Dukes and Soul-Overseers have, whose special trade it was to remember them! Hence these tears.— Plugson, who has indomitably spun Cotton merely to gain thousands of pounds, I have to call as yet a Bucanier and Chactaw; till there come something better, still more indomitable from him. His hundred Thousand-pound Notes, if there be nothing other, are to me but as the hundred Scalps in a Chactaw wigwam. The blind Plugson: he was a Captain of Industry, born member of the Ultimate genuine Aristocracy of this Universe, could he have known it! These thousand men that span and toiled round him, they were a regiment whom he had enlisted, man by man; to make war on a very genuine enemy: Bareness of back, and disobedient Cotton-fiber, which will not, unless forced to it, consent to cover bare backs. Here is a most genuine enemy; over whom all creatures will wish him victory. He enlisted his thousand men; said to them, 'Come, brothers, let us have a dash at Cotton!' They follow with cheerful shout; they gain such a victory over Cotton as the Earth has to admire and clap hands at: but, alas, it is yet only of the Bucanier or Chactaw sort,— as good as no victory! Foolish Plugson of St. Dolly Undershot: does he hope to become illustrious by hanging up the scalps in his wigwam, the hundred thousands at his banker's, and saying, Behold my scalps? Why, Plugson, even thy own host is all in mutiny: Cotton is conquered; but the 'bare backs'— are worse covered than ever! Indomitable Plugson, thou must cease to be a Chactaw; thou and others; thou thyself, if no other!

Did William the Norman Bastard, or any of his Taillefers, *Ironcutters,* manage so? Ironcutter, at the end of the campaign, did not turn-off his thousand fighters, but said to them: 'Noble fighters, this is the land we have gained; be I Lord in it,— what we will call *Law-ward,* maintainer and *keeper* of Heaven's *Laws:* be I *Law-ward,* or in brief orthoepy *Lord* in it, and be ye Loyal Men around me in it; and we will stand by one another, as soldiers round a captain, for again we shall have need of one another!' Plugson, bucanier-like, says to them: 'Noble spinners, this is the Hundred Thousand we have gained wherein I mean to dwell and plant vineyards; the hundred thousand is mine, the three and sixpence daily was yours: adieu, noble spinners; drink my health with this groat each, which I give you over and above!' The entirely unjust Captain of Industry, say I; not Chevalier, but Bucanier! 'Commercial Law' does indeed acquit him; asks, with wide eyes, What else? So too Howell Davies asks, Was it not according to the strictest Bucanier Custom? Did I depart in any jot or tittle from the Laws of the Bucaniers?

After all, money, as they say, is miraculous. Plugson wanted victory; as Chevaliers and Bucaniers, and all men alike do. He found money recognized, by the whole world with one assent, as the true symbol, exact equivalent and synonym of victory;— and here we have him, a grimbrowed, indomitable Bucanier, coming home to us with a 'victory,' which the whole world is *ceasing* to clap hands at! The whole world, taught somewhat impressively, is beginning to recognize that such victory is but half a victory; and that now, if it please the Powers, we must — have the other half!

Money is miraculous. What miraculous facilities has it yielded, will it yield us; but also what never-imagined confusions, obscurations has it brought in; down almost to total extinction of the moral-sense in large masses of mankind! 'Protection of property,' of what is '*mine,*' means with most men protection of money,— the thing which, had I a thousand padlocks over it, is least of all *mine;* is, in a manner, scarcely worth calling mine! The symbol shall be held sacred, defended everywhere with tipstaves, ropes, and gibbets; the thing signified shall be composedly cast to the dogs. A human being who has worked with human beings clears all scores with them, cuts himself with triumphant completeness forever loose from them, by paying down certain shillings and pounds. Was it not the wages, I promised you? There they are, to the last sixpence,— according to the Laws of the Bucaniers! — Yes, indeed; — and, at such times, it becomes imperatively necessary to ask all persons, bucaniers and others, Whether

these same respectable Laws of the Bucaniers are written on God's eternal Heavens at all, on the inner Heart of Man at all; or on the respectable Bucanier Logbook merely, for the convenience of bucaniering merely? What a question;—whereat Westminster Hall shudders to its driest parchment; and on the dead wigs each particular horsehair stands on end!

The Laws of Laissez-faire, O Westminster, the laws of industrial Captain and industrial Soldier, how much more of idle Captain and industrial Soldier, will need to be remodeled, and modified, and rectified in a hundred and a hundred ways,—and *not* in the Sliding-scale direction, but in the totally opposite one! With two million industrial Soldiers already sitting in Bastilles, and five million pining on potatoes, methinks Westminster cannot begin too soon!—A man has other obligations laid on him, in God's Universe, than the payment of cash: these also Westminster, if it will continue to exist and have board-wages, must contrive to take some charge of:—by Westminster or by another, they must and will be taken charge of; be, with whatever difficulty, got articulated, got enforced, and to a certain approximate extent put in practice. And, as I say, it cannot be too soon! For Mammonism, left to itself, has become Midas-eared; and with all its gold mountains, sits starving for want of bread: and Dilettantism with its partridge-nets, in this extremely earnest Universe of ours, is playing somewhat too high a game. 'A man by the very look of him promises so much': yes; and by the rent-roll of him does he promis nothing?—

Alas, what a business will this be, which our Continental friends, groping this long while somewhat absurdly about it and about it, call 'Organization of Labor';—which must be taken out of the hand of absurd windy persons, and put into the hands of wise, laborious, modest and valiant men, to begin with it straightway; to proceed with it, and succeed in it more and more, if Europe, at any rate if England, is to continue habitable much longer. Looking at the kind of most noble Corn-Law Dukes or Practical *Duces* we have, and also of right reverend Soul-Overseers, Christian Spiritual *Duces* 'on a minimum of four thousand five hundred,' one's hopes are a little chilled. Courage, nevertheless; there are many brave men in England! My indomitable Plugson,—nay is there not even in thee some hope? Thou art hitherto a Bucanier, as it was written and prescribed for thee by an evil world: but in that grim brow, in that indomitable heart which *can* conquer Cotton, do there not perhaps lie other ten-times nobler conquests?

CHAPTER XI

LABOR

For there is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in Work. Were he never so benighted, forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in a man that actually and earnestly works: in Idleness alone is there perpetual despair. Work, never so Mammonish, mean, *is* in communication with Nature; the real desire to get Work done will itself lead one more and more to truth, to Nature's appointments and regulations, which are truth.

The latest Gospel in this world is, Know thy work and do it. 'Know thyself': long enough has that poor 'self' of thine tormented thee; thou wilt never get to 'know' it, I believe! Think it not thy business, this of knowing thyself; thou art an unknowable individual: know what thou canst work at; and work at it, like a Hercules! That will be thy better plan.

It has been written, 'an endless significance lies in Work'; a man perfects himself by working. Foul jungles are cleared away, fair seedfields rise instead, and stately cities; and withal the man himself first ceases to be a jungle and foul unwholesome desert thereby. Consider how, even in the meanest sorts of Labor, the whole soul of a man is composed into a kind of real harmony, the instant he sets himself to work! Doubt, Desire, Sorrow, Remorse, Indignation, Despair itself, all these like helldogs lie beleaguering the soul of the poor dayworker, as of every man: but he bends himself with free valor against his task, and all these are stilled, all these shrink murmuring far off into their caves. The man is now a man. The blessed glow of Labor in him,

is it not as purifying fire, wherein all poison is burnt up, and of sour smoke itself there is made bright blessed flame!

Destiny, on the whole, has no other way of cultivating us. A formless Chaos, once set it *revolving*, grows round and ever rounder; ranges itself, by mere force of gravity, into strata, spherical courses; is no longer a Chaos, but a round compacted World. What would become of the Earth, did she cease to revolve? In the poor old Earth, so long as she revolves, all inequalities, irregularities disperse themselves; all irregularities are incessantly becoming regular. Hast thou looked on the Potter's wheel,— one of the venerablest objects; old as the Prophet Ezechiel and far older? Rude lumps of clay, how they spin themselves up, by mere quick whirling, into beautiful circular dishes. And fancy the most assiduous Potter, but without his wheel; reduced to make dishes or rather amorphous botches, by mere kneading and baking! Even such a Potter were Destiny, with a human soul that would rest and lie at ease, that would not work and spin! Of an idle unrevolving man the kindest Destiny, like the most assiduous Potter without wheel, can bake and knead nothing other than a botch; let her spend on him what expensive coloring, what gilding and enameling she will, he is but a botch. Not a dish; no, a bulging, kneaded, crooked, shambling, squint-cornered, amorphous botch,— a mere enameled vessel of dishonor! Let the idle think of this.

Blessed is he who has found his work; let him ask no other blessedness. He has a work, a life-purpose; he has found it, and will follow it! How, as a free-flowing channel, dug and torn by noble force through the sour mud-swamp of one's existence, like an ever-deepening river there, it runs and flows; — draining-off the sour festering water, gradually from the root of the remotest grass-blade; making, instead of pestilential swamp, a green fruitful meadow with its clear-flowing stream. How blessed for the meadow itself, let the stream and *its* value be great or small! Labor is Life: from the inmost heart of the Worker rises his god-given Force, the sacred celestial Life-essence breathed into him by Almighty God; from his inmost heart awakens him to all nobleness,— to all knowledge, 'self-knowledge' and much else, so soon as Work fitly begins. Knowledge? The knowledge that will hold good in working, cleave thou to that; for Nature herself accredits that, says Yea to that. Properly thou hast no other knowledge but what thou hast got by working: the rest is yet all a hypothesis of knowledge; a thing to be argued of in schools, a thing floating in the clouds, in endless logic-vortices, till we try it and fix it. 'Doubt, of whatever kind, can be ended by Action alone.'

And again, hast thou valued Patience, Courage, Perseverance, Openness to light; readiness to own thyself mistaken, to do better next time? All these, all virtues, in wrestling with the dim brute Powers of Fact, in ordering of thy fellows in such wrestle, there and elsewhere not at all, thou wilt continually learn. Set down a brave Sir Christopher in the middle of black ruined Stone-heaps, of foolish unarchitectural Bishops, redtape Officials, idle Nell-Gwyn Defenders of the Faith; and see whether he will ever raise a Paul's Cathedral out of all that, yea or no! Rough, rude, contradictory are all things and persons, from the mutinous masons and Irish hodmen, up to the idle Nell-Gwyn Defenders, to blustering redtape Officials, foolish unarchitectural Bishops. All these things and persons are there not for Christopher's sake and his Cathedral's; they are there for their own sake mainly! Christopher will have to conquer and constrain all these,— if he be able. All these are against him. Equitable Nature herself, who carries her mathematics and architectonics not on the face of her, but deep in the hidden heart of her,— Nature herself is but partially for him; will be wholly against him, if he constrain her not! His very money, where is it to come from? The pious munificence of England lies far-scattered, distant, unable to speak, and say, 'I am here'; — must be spoken to before it can speak. Pious munificence, and all help, is so silent, invisible like the gods; impediment, contradictions manifold are so loud and near! O brave Sir Christopher, trust thou in those notwithstanding, and front all these; understand all these; by valiant patience, noble effort, insight, by man's-strength, vanquish and compel all these.

— and, on the whole, strike down victoriously the last topstone of that Paul's Edifice; thy monument for certain centuries, the stamp 'Great Man' impressed very legibly on Portland-stone there! —

Yes, all manner of help, and pious response from Men or Nature, is always what we call silent; cannot speak or come to light, till it be seen, till it be spoken to. Every noble work is at first 'impossible.' In very truth, for every noble work the possibilities will lie diffused through Immensity; inarticulate, undiscoverable except to faith. Like Gideon thou shalt spread out thy fleece at the door of thy tent; see whether under the wide arch of Heaven there be any bounteous moisture, or none. Thy heart and life-purpose shall be as a miraculous Gideon's fleece, spread out in silent appeal to Heaven: and from the kind Immensities, what from the poor unkind Localities and town and country Parishes there never could, blessed dew-moisture to suffice thee shall have fallen!

(Work is of a religious nature;) — work is of a *brave* nature; which it is the aim of all religion to be. All work of man is as the swimmer's: a waste ocean threatens to devour him; if he front it not bravely, it will keep its word. By incessant wise defiance of it, lusty rebuke and buffet of it, behold how it loyally supports him, bears him as its conqueror along. 'It is so,' says Goethe, 'with all things that man undertakes in this world.'

Brave Sea-captain, Norse Sea-king, — Columbus, my hero, royalest Sea-king of all! it is no friendly environment this of thine, in the waste deep waters; around thee mutinous discouraged souls, behind thee disgrace and ruin, before thee the unpenetrated veil of Night. Brother, these wild water-mountains, bounding from their deep bases (ten miles deep, I am told), are not entirely there on thy behalf! Meseems *they* have other work than floating thee forward: — and the huge Winds, that sweep from Ursa Major to the Tropics and Equators, dancing their giant-waltz through the kingdoms of Chaos and Immensity, they care little about filling rightly or filling wrongly the small shoulder-of-mutton sails in this cockle-skiff of thine! Thou art not among articulate-speaking friends, my brother; thou art among immeasurable dumb monsters, tumbling, howling wide as the world here. Secret, far off, invisible to all hearts but thine, there lies a help in them: see how thou wilt get at that. Patiently thou wilt wait till the mad Southwester spend itself, saving thyself by dextrous science of defense, the while: valiantly, with swift decision, wilt thou strike in, when the favoring East, the Possible, springs up. Mutiny of men thou wilt sternly repress; weakness, despondency, thou wilt cheerily encourage: thou wilt swallow down complaint, unreason, weariness, weakness of others and thyself; — how much wilt thou swallow down! There shall be a depth of Silence in thee, deeper than this Sea, which is but ten miles deep: a Silence unsoundable; known to God only. Thou shalt be a Great Man. Yes, my World-Soldier, thou of the World Marine-service, — thou wilt have to be *greater* than this tumultuous unmeasured World here round thee is; thou, in thy strong soul, as with wrestler's arms, shalt embrace it, harness it down; and make it bear thee on, — to new Americas, or whither God wills!

CHAPTER XII

REWARD

'Religion,' I said; for, properly speaking, all true Work is Religion: and whatsoever Religion is not Work may go and dwell among the Brahmins, Antinomians, Spinning Dervishes, or where it will; with me it shall have no harbor. Admirable was that of the old Monks, '*Laborare est Orare*, Work is Worship.'

Older than all preached Gospels was this unpreached, inarticulate, but ineradicable, forever-enduring Gospel: Work, and therein have wellbeing. Man, Son of Earth and of Heaven, lies there not, in the innermost heart of thee, a Spirit of active Method, a Force for Work; — and burns like a painfully-smoldering fire, giving thee no rest till thou unfold it, till thou write it down in beneficent Facts around thee! What is immethodic, waste, thou shalt make methodic, regulated, arable; obedient and productive to thee. Wheresoever thou findest Disorder, there is thy eternal enemy; attack him swiftly, subdue him; make Order of him, the subject not of Chaos, but of Intelli-

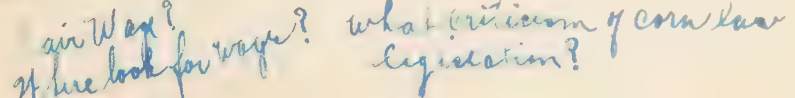
gence, Divinity and Thee! The thistle that grows in thy path, dig it out, that a blade of useful grass, a drop of nourishing milk, may grow there instead. The waste cotton-shrub, gather its waste white down, spin it, weave it; that, in place of idle litter, there may be folded webs, and the naked skin of man be covered.

But above all, where thou findest Ignorance, Stupidity, Brute-mindedness,—yes, there, with or without Church-tithes and Shovel-hat, with or without Talfourd-Mahon Copyrights, or were it with mere dungeons and gibbets and crosses, attack it, I say; smite it wisely, unweariedly, and rest not while thou livest and it lives; but smite, smite, in the name of God! The Highest God, as I understand it, does audibly so command thee; still audibly, if thou have ears to hear. He, even He, with his *un*spoken voice, awfuler than any Sinai thunders or syllabled speech of Whirlwinds; for the SILENCE of deep Eternities, of Worlds from beyond the morning-stars, does it not speak to thee? The unborn Ages; the old Graves, with their long-moldering dust, the very tears that wetted it now all dry,—do not these speak to thee, what ear hath not heard? The deep Death-kingdoms, the Stars in their never-resting courses, all Space and all Time, proclaim it to thee in continual silent admonition. Thou too, if ever man should, shalt work while it is called To-day. For the Night cometh, wherein no man can work.

All true Work is sacred; in all true Work, were it but true hand-labor, there is something of divineness. Labor, wide as the Earth, has its summit in Heaven. Sweat of the brow; and up from that to sweat of the brain, sweat of the heart; which includes all Kepler calculations, Newton meditations, all Sciences, all spoken Epics, all acted Heroisms, Martyrdoms,—up to that 'Agony of bloody sweat,' which all men have called divine! O brother, if this is not 'worship,' then I say, the more pity for worship; for this is the noblest thing yet discovered under God's sky. Who art thou that complainest of thy life of toil? Complain not. Look up, my wearied brother; see thy fellow Workmen there, in God's Eternity; surviving there, they alone surviving: sacred Band of the Immortals, celestial Bodyguard of the Empire of Mankind. Even in the weak Human Memory they survive so long, as saints, as heroes, as gods; they alone surviving; peopling, they alone, the unmeasured solitudes of Time! To thee Heaven, though severe, is *not* unkind; Heaven is kind,—as a noble Mother; as that Spartan Mother, saying while she gave her son his shield, 'With it, my son, or upon it!' Thou too shalt return *home* in honor; to thy far-distant home, in honor; doubt it not,—if in the battle thou keep thy shield! Thou, in the Eternities and deepest Death-kingdoms, art not an alien; thou everywhere art a denizen! Complain not; the very Spartans did not *complain*.

And who art thou that braggest of thy life of Idleness; complacently showest thy bright gilt equipages; sumptuous cushions; appliances for folding of the hands to mere sleep? Looking up, looking down, around, behind or before, discernest thou, if it be not in Mayfair alone, any *idle* hero, saint, god, or even devil? Not a vestige of one. In the Heavens, in the Earth, in the Waters under the Earth, is none like unto thee. Thou art an original figure in this Creation; a denizen in Mayfair alone, in this extraordinary Century or Half-Century alone! One monster there is in the world: the idle man. What is his 'Religion'? That Nature is a Phantasm, where cunning beggary or thievery may sometimes find good victual. That God is a lie; and that Man and his Life are a lie.—Alas, alas, who of us *is* there that can say, I have worked? The faithfulest of us are unprofitable servants; the faithfulest of us know that best. The faithfulest of us may say, with sad and true old Samuel, 'Much of my life has been trifled away!' But he that has, and except 'on public occasions' professes to have, no function but that of going idle in a graceful or graceless manner; and of begetting sons to go idle; and to address Chief Spinners and Diggers, who at least *are* spinning and digging, 'Ye scandalous persons who produce too much'—My Corn-Law friends, on what imaginary still richer Eldorados, and true iron-spikes with law of gravitation, are ye rushing!

As to the Wages of Work there might innumerable things be said; there will and must yet innumerable things be said and



spoken, in St. Stephen's and out of St. Stephen's; and gradually not a few things be ascertained and written, on Law-parchment, concerning this very matter:— 'Fair day's-wages for a fair day's-work' is the most unrefusable demand! Money-wages 'to the extent of keeping your worker alive that he may work more'; these, unless you mean to dismiss him straightway out of this world, are indispensable alike to the noblest Worker and to the least noble!

One thing only I will say here, in special reference to the former class, the noble and noblest; but throwing light on all the other classes and their arrangements of this difficult matter: The 'wages' of every noble Work do yet lie in Heaven or else Nowhere. Not in Bank-of-England bills, in Owen's Labor-bank, or any the most improved establishment of banking and money-changing, needest thou, heroic soul, present thy account of earnings. Human banks and labor-banks know thee not; or know thee after generations and centuries have passed away, and thou art clean gone from 'rewarding,'— all manner of bank-drafts, shop-tills, and Downing-street Exchequers lying very invisible, so far from thee! Nay, at bottom, dost thou need any reward? Was it thy aim and life-purpose to be filled with good things for thy heroism; to have a life of pomp and ease, and be what men call 'happy,' in this world, or in any other world? I answer for thee deliberately. No. The whole spiritual secret of the new epoch lies in this, that thou canst answer for thyself, with thy whole clearness of head and heart, deliberately, No!

My brother, the brave man has to give his Life away. Give it, I advise thee; — thou dost not expect to *sell* thy Life in an adequate manner? What price, for example, would content thee? The just price of thy LIFE to thee,— why, God's entire Creation to thyself, the whole Universe of Space, the whole Eternity of Time, and what they hold: that is the price which would content thee; that, and if thou wilt be candid, nothing short of that! It is thy all; and for it thou wouldst have all. Thou art an unreasonable mortal; — or rather thou art a poor *infinite* mortal, who, in thy narrow clay-prison here, *seemest* so unreasonable! Thou wilt never sell thy Life, or any part of thy Life, in a satisfactory manner. Give it, like a royal heart; let the price be Nothing: thou *hast* then, in a certain sense, got All for it! The heroic man,— and is not every man, God be thanked, a potential hero? — has to do so, in all times and circumstances. In the most heroic age, as in the most unheroic, he will have to say, as Burns said proudly and humbly of his little Scottish Songs, little dewdrops of Celestial Melody in an age when so much was unmelodious: 'By Heaven, they shall either be invaluable or of no value; I do not need your guineas for them.' It is an element which should, and must, enter deeply into all settlements of wages here below. They never will be 'satisfactory' otherwise; they cannot, O Mammon Gospel, they never can! Money for my little piece of work 'to the extent that will allow me to keep working'; yes, this,— unless you mean that I shall go my ways *before* the work is all taken out of me: but as to 'wages'— ! —

On the whole, we do entirely agree with those old Monks, *Laborare est Orare*. In a thousand senses, from one end of it to the other, true Work *is* Worship. He that works, whatsoever be his work, he bodies forth the form of Things Unseen; a small Poet every Worker is. The idea, were it but of his poor Delf Platter, how much more of his Epic Poem, is as yet 'seen,' half-seen, only by himself; to all others it is a thing unseen, impossible; to Nature herself it is a thing unseen, a thing which never hitherto was; — very 'impossible,' for it is as yet a No-thing! The Unseen Powers had need to watch over such a man; he works in and for the Unseen. Alas, if he look to the Seen Powers only, he may as well quit the business; his No-thing will never rightly issue as a Thing, but as a Deceptivity, a Sham-thing,— which it had better not do!

Thy No-thing of an Intended Poem, O Poet who hast looked merely to reviewers, copyrights, booksellers, popularities, behold it has not yet become a Thing; for the truth is not in it! Though printed, hotpressed, reviewed, celebrated, sold to the twentieth edition: what is all that? The Thing, in philosophical uncommercial language, is still a No-thing, mostly

semblance and deception of the sight;—benign Oblivion incessantly gnawing at it, impatient till Chaos to which it belongs, do reabsorb it!—

He who takes not counsel of the Unseen and Silent, from him will never come real visibility and speech. Thou must descend to the *Mothers*, to the *Manes*, and Hercules-like long suffer and labor there, wouldst thou emerge with victory into the sunlight. As in battle and the shock of war,—for is not this a battle?—thou too shalt fear no pain or death, shalt love no ease or life; the voice of festive Lubberlands, the noise of greedy Acheron shall alike lie silent under thy victorious feet. Thy work, like Dante's, shall 'make thee lean for many years.' The world and its wages, its criticisms, counsels, helps, impediments, shall be as a waste ocean-flood; the chaos through which thou art to swim and sail. Not the waste waves and their weedy gulf-streams, shalt thou take for guidance: thy star alone,—'*Se tu segui tua stella!*' Thy star alone, now clear-beaming over Chaos, nay now by fits gone out, disastrously eclipsed: this only shalt thou strive to follow. O, it is a business, as I fancy, that of weltering your way through Chaos and the murk of Hell! Green-eyed dragons watching you, three-headed Cerberuses,—not without sympathy of *their* sort! '*Eccovi l' uom ch' è stato all' Inferno.*' For in fine, as Poet Dryden says, you do walk hand in hand with sheer Madness, all the way,—who is by no means pleasant company! You look fixedly into Madness, and *her* undiscovered, boundless, bottomless Night-empire; that you may extort new Wisdom out of it, as an Eurydice from Tartarus. The higher the Wisdom, the closer was its neighborhood and kindred with mere Insanity; literally so;—and thou wilt, with a speechless feeling, observe how highest Wisdom, struggling up into this world, has oftentimes carried such tinctures and adhesions of Insanity still cleaving to it hither!

§ All Works, each in their degree, are a making of Madness sane;—truly though a religious operation; which cannot be carried on without religion. You have not work otherwise; you have eye-service, greedy grasping of wages, swift and ever swifter manufacture of semblances to get hold of wages. Instead of better felt-hats to cover your head, you have bigger lath and-plaster hats set traveling the streets on wheels. Instead of heavenly and earthly Guidance for the souls of men, you have 'Black or White Surplice' Controversies, stuffed hair-and-leather Popes;—terrestrial *Law-wards*, Lords and Law-bringers, 'organizing Labor' in these years, by passing Corn-Laws. With all which, alas, this distracted Earth is now full, nigh to bursting. Semblances most smooth to the touch and eye; most accursed, nevertheless, to body and soul. Semblances, be they of Sham-woven Cloth or of Dilettante Legislation, which are *not* real wool or substance, but Devil's-dust, accursed of God and man! No man has worked, or can work, except religiously; not even the poor day-laborer, the weaver of your coat, the sewer of your shoes. All men, if they work not as in a Great Taskmaster's eye, will work wrong, work unhappily for themselves and you.

Industrial work, still under bondage to Mammon, the rational soul of it not yet awakened, is a tragic spectacle. Men in the rapidest motion and self-motion; restless, with convulsive energy, as if driven by Galvanism, as if possessed by a Devil; tearing asunder mountains,—to no purpose, for Mammonism is always Midas-eared! This is sad, on the face of it. Yet courage: the beneficent Destinies, kind in their sternness, are apprising us that this cannot continue. Labor is not a devil, even while encased in Mammonism; Labor is ever an imprisoned god, writhing unconsciously or consciously to escape out of Mammonism! Plugson of Undershot, like Taillefer of Normandy, wants victory; how much happier will even Plugson be to have a Chivalrous victory than a Chactaw one! The unredeemed ugliness is that of a slothful People. Show me a People energetically busy; heaving, struggling, all shoulders at the wheel; their heart pulsing, every muscle swelling, with man's energy and will;—I show you a People of whom great good is already predicable; to whom all manner of good is yet certain, if their energy endure. By very working, they will learn; they have, Antæus-like, their foot on Mother Fact: how can they but learn?

The vulgarest Plugson of a Master-Worker, who can command Workers, and get work out of them, is already a considerable man. Blessed and thrice-blessed symptoms I discern of Master-Workers who are not vulgar men; who are Nobles, and begin to feel that they must act as such: all speed to these, they are England's hope at present! But in this Plugson himself, conscious of almost no nobleness whatever, how much is there! Not without man's faculty, insight, courage, hard energy, is this rugged figure. His words none of the wisest; but his actings cannot be altogether foolish. Think, how were it, stoodst thou suddenly in his shoes! He has to command a thousand men. And not imaginary commanding; no, it is real, incessantly practical. The evil passions of so many men (with the Devil in them, as in all of us) he has to vanquish; by manifold force of speech and of silence, to repress or evade. What a force of silence, to say nothing of the others, is in Plugson! For these his thousand men he has to provide raw-material, machinery, arrangement, houseroom; and ever at the week's end, wages by due sale. No Civil-List, or Goulburn-Baring Budget has he to fall back upon, for paying of his regiment; he has to pick his supplies from the confused face of the whole Earth and Contemporaneous History, by his dexterity alone. There will be dry eyes if he fail to do it! — He exclaims, at present, 'black in the face,' near strangled with Dilettante Legislation: 'Let me have elbow-room, throat-room, and I will not fail! No, I will spin yet, and conquer like a giant: what "sinews of war" lie in me, untold resources towards the Conquest of this Planet, if instead of hanging me, you husband them, and help me!' — My indomitable friend, it is *true;* and thou shalt and must be helped.

This is not a man I would kill and strangle by Corn-Laws, even if I could! No, I would fling my Corn-laws and shot-belts to the Devil; and try to help this man. I would teach him, by noble precept and law-precept, by noble example most of all, that Mammonism was not the essence of his or of my station in God's Universe; but the adscititious excrescence of it; the gross, terrene, godless embodiment of it; which would have to become, more or less, a godlike one. By noble *real* legislation, by true *noble's*-work, by unwearied, valiant, and were it wageless effort, in my Parliament and in my Parish, I would aid, constrain, encourage him to effect more or less this blessed change. I should know that it would have to be effected; that unless it were in some measure effected, he and I and all of us, I first and soonest of all, were doomed to perdition! — Effected it will be; unless it were a Demon that made this Universe; which I, for my own part, do at no moment, under no form, in the least believe.

May it please your Serene Highnesses, your Majesties, Lordships and Lawwardships, the proper Epic of this world is not now 'Arms and the Man'; how much less, 'Shirt-frills and the Man': no, it is now 'Tools and the Man': that, henceforth to all time, is now our Epic; — and you, first of all others, I think were wise to take note of that!

CHAPTER XIII

DEMOCRACY

If the Serene Highnesses and Majesties do not take note of that, then, as I perceive, *that* will take note of itself! The time for levity, insincerity, and idle babble and play-acting, in all kinds, is gone by; it is a serious, grave time. Old long-vexed questions, not yet solved in logical words or parliamentary laws, are fast solving themselves in facts, somewhat unblessed to behold! This largest of questions, this question of Work and Wages, which ought, had we heeded Heaven's voice, to have begun two generations ago or more, cannot be delayed longer without hearing Earth's voice. 'Labor' will verily need to be somewhat 'organized,' as they say, — God knows with what difficulty. Man will actually need to have his debts and earnings a little better paid by man: which, let Parliaments speak of them or be silent of them, are eternally his due from man, and cannot, without penalty and at length not without death-penalty, be withheld. How much ought to cease among us straightway; how much ought to begin straightway, while the hours yet are!

Truly they are strange results to which

this of leaving all to 'Cash'; of quietly shutting-up the God's Temple, and gradually opening wide-open the Mammon's Temple, with 'Lassez-faire, and Every man for himself,'—have led us in these days! We have Upper, speaking Classes, who indeed do 'speak' as never man spake before; the withered flimsiness, the godless baseness and barrenness of whose Speech might of itself indicate what kind of Doing and practical Governing went on under it! For Speech is the gaseous element out of which most kinds of Practice and Performance, especially all kinds of moral Performance, condense themselves, and take shape; as the one is, so will the other be. Descending, accordingly, into the Dumb Class in its Stockport Cellars and Poor-Law Bastilles, have we not to announce that they also are hitherto unexampled in the History of Adam's Posterity?

Life was never a May-game for men: in all times the lot of the dumb millions born to toil was defaced with manifold sufferings, injustices, heavy burdens, avoidable and unavoidable; not play at all, but hard work that made the sinews sore and the heart sore. As bond-slaves, *villani, bordarii, sochemanni,* nay indeed as dukes, earls and kings, men were oftentimes made weary of their life; and had to say, in the sweat of their brow and of their soul, Behold, it is not sport, it is grim earnest, and our back can bear no more! Who knows not what massacrings and harryings there have been; grinding, long-continuing, unbearable injustices,—till the heart had to rise in madness, and some *'Eu Sachsen, nimith euer sachses,* You Saxons, out with your gully-knives, then!' You Saxons, some 'arrestment,' partial 'arrestment of the Knaves and Dastards' has become indispensable!—The page of Dryasdust is heavy with such details.

And yet I will venture to believe that in no time, since the beginnings of Society, was the lot of those same dumb millions of toilers so entirely unbearable as it is even in the days now passing over us. It is not to die, or even to die of hunger, that makes a man wretched; many men have died; all men must die,—the last exit of us all is in a Fire-Chariot of Pain. But it is to live miserable we know not why; to work sore and yet gain nothing; to be heart-worn, weary, yet isolated, unrelated, girt-in with a cold universal Laissez-faire: it is to die slowly all our life long, imprisoned in a deaf, dead, Infinite Injustice, as in the accursed iron belly of a Phalaris' Bull! This is and remains forever intolerable to all men whom God has made. Do we wonder at French Revolutions, Chartisms, Revolts of Three Days? The times, if we will consider them, are really unexampled.

Never before did I hear of an Irish Widow reduced to 'prove her sisterhood by dying of typhus-fever and infecting seventeen persons,'—saying in such undeniable way, 'You *see* I was your sister!' Sisterhood, brotherhood, was often forgotten; but not till the rise of these ultimate Mammon and Shotbelt Gospels did I ever see it so expressly denied. If no pious Lord or *Law-ward* would remember it, always some pious Lady (*'Hlaf-dig,'* Benefactress, *'Loaf-giveress,'* they say she is,—blessings on her beautiful heart!) was there, with mild mother-voice and hand, to remember it; some pious thoughtful *Elder,* what we now call 'Prester,' *Presbyter* or 'Priest,' was there to put all men in mind of it, in the name of the God who had made all.

Not even in Black Dahomey was it ever, I think, forgotten to the typhus-fever length. Mungo Park, resourceless, had sunk down to die under the Negro Village-Tree, a horrible White object in the eyes of all. But in the poor Black Woman, and her daughter who stood aghast at him, whose earthly wealth and funded capital consisted of one small Calabash of rice, there lived a heart richer than *Laissez-faire:* they, with a royal munificence, boiled their rice for him; they sang all night to him, spinning assiduous on their cotton distaffs, as he lay to sleep: 'Let us pity the poor white man; no mother has he to fetch him milk, no sister to grind him corn!' Thou poor black Noble One,—thou *Lady* too: did not a God make thee too; was there not in thee too something of a God!—

Gurth, born thrall of Cedric the Saxon, has been greatly pitied by Dryasdust and others. Gurth, with the brass collar round his neck, tending Cedric's pigs in the glades of the wood, is not what I call an exemplar of human felicity: but

Gurth, with the sky above him, with the free air and tinted boscage and umbrage round him, and in him at least the certainty of supper and social lodging when he came home; Gurth to me seems happy, in comparison with many a Lancashire and Buckinghamshire man of these days, not born thrall of anybody! Gurth's brass collar did not gall him: Cedric *deserved* to be his master: The pigs were Cedric's, but Gurth too would get his parings of them. Gurth had the inexpressible satisfaction of feeling himself related indissolubly, though in a rude brass-collar way, to his fellow-mortals in this Earth. He had superiors, inferiors, equals.—Gurth is now 'emancipated' long since; has what we call 'Liberty.' Liberty, I am told, is a divine thing. Liberty when it becomes the 'Liberty to die by starvation' is not so divine!

Liberty? The true liberty of a man, you would say, consisted in his finding out, or being forced to find out the right path, and to walk thereon. To learn, or to be taught, what work he actually was able for; and then by permission, persuasion, and even compulsion, to set about doing of the same! That is his true blessedness, honor, 'liberty' and maximum of wellbeing: if liberty be not that, I for one have small care about liberty. You do not allow a palpable madman to leap over precipices; you violate his liberty, you that are wise; and keep him, were it in strait-waistcoats, away from the precipices! Every stupid, every cowardly and foolish man is but a less palpable madman: his true liberty were that a wiser man, that any and every wiser man, could, by brass collars, or in whatever milder or sharper way, lay hold of him when he was going wrong, and order and compel him to go a little righter. O, if thou really art my *Senior,* Seigneur, my *Elder,* Presbyter or Priest,—if thou art in very deed my *Wiser,* may a beneficent instinct lead and impel thee to 'conquer' me, to command me! If thou do know better than I what is good and right, I conjure thee in the name of God, force me to do it; were it by never such brass collars, whips and handcuffs, leave me not to walk over precipices! That I have been called, by all the Newspapers, a 'free man' will avail me little, if my pilgrimage have ended in death and wreck. O that the Newspaper had called me slave, coward, fool, or what it pleased their sweet voices to name me, and I had attained not death, but life!—Liberty requires new definitions.

A conscious abhorrence and intolerance of Folly, of Baseness, Stupidity, Poltroonery and all that brood of things, dwells deep in some men: still deeper in others an *un*conscious abhorrence and intolerance, clothed moreover by the beneficent Supreme Powers in what stout appetites, energies, egoisms so-called, are suitable to it;—these latter are your Conquerors, Romans, Normans, Russians, Indo-English; Founders of what we call Aristocracies. Which indeed have they not the most 'divine right' to found;—being themselves very truly "Αριστοι, Bravest, Best; and conquering generally a confused rabble of Worst, or at lowest, clearly enough, of Worse? I think their divine right, tried, with affirmatory verdict, in the greatest Law-Court known to me, was good! A class of men who are dreadfully exclaimed against by Dryasdust; of whom nevertheless beneficent Nature has oftentimes had need; and may, alas, again have need.

When, across the hundredfold poor scepticisms, trivialisms and constitutional cobwebberies of Dryasdust, you catch any glimpse of a William the Conqueror, a Tancred of Hauteville or such like,—do you not discern veritably some rude outline of a true God-made King; whom not the Champion of England cased in tin, but all Nature and the Universe were calling to the throne? It is absolutely necessary that he get thither. Nature does not mean her poor Saxon children to perish, of obesity, stupor or other malady, as yet: a stern Ruler and Line of Rulers therefore is called in,—a stern but most beneficent *perpetual House-Surgeon* is by Nature herself called in, and even the appropriate *fees* are provided for him! Dryasdust talks lamentably about Hereward and the Fen Counties; fate of Earl Waltheof; Yorkshire and the North reduced to ashes: all which is undoubtedly lamentable. But even Dryasdust apprises me of one fact: 'A child, in this William's reign, might have carried a purse of gold from end to end of England.' My erudite friend, it is a fact

which outweighs a thousand! Sweep away thy constitutional, sentimental and other cobwebberies; look eye to eye, if thou still have any eye, in the face of this big burly William Bastard: thou wilt see a fellow of most flashing discernment, of most strong lion-heart; in whom, as it were, within a frame of oak and iron, the gods have planted the soul of 'a man of genius'! Dost thou call that nothing? I call it an immense thing! — Rage enough was in this Willelmus Conquæstor, rage enough for his occasions; — and yet the essential element of him, as of all such men, is not scorching *fire,* but shining illuminative *light.* Fire and light are strangely interchangeable; nay, at bottom, I have found them different forms of the same most godlike 'elementary substance' in our world: a thing worth stating in these days. The essential element of this Conquæstor is, first of all, the most sun-eyed perception of what *is* really what on this God's-Earth; — which, thou wilt find, does mean at bottom 'Justice,' and 'Virtues' not a few: *Conformity* to what the Maker has seen good to make; that, I suppose, will mean Justice and a Virtue or two? —

Dost thou think Willelmus Conquæstor would have tolerated ten years' jargon, one hour's jargon, on the propriety of killing Cotton-manufactures by partridge Corn-Laws? I fancy, this was not the man to knock out of his night's rest with nothing but a noisy bedlamism in your mouth! 'Assist us still better to bush the partridges; strangle Plugson who spins the shirts?'—'*Par la Splendeur de Dieu!*'— — Dost thou think Willelmus Conquæstor, in this new time, with Steamengine Captains of Industry on one hand of him, and Joe-Manton Captains of Idleness on the other, would have doubted which *was* really the BEST; which did deserve strangling, and which not?

I have a certain indestructible regard for Willelmus Conquæstor. A resident House-surgeon, provided by Nature for her beloved English People, and even furnished with the requisite fees, as I said; for he by no means felt himself doing Nature's work, this Willelmus, but his own work exclusively! And his own work withal it was; informed '*par la Splendeur de Dieu.*'— I say, it is necessary to get the work out of such a man, however harsh that be! When a world, not yet doomed for death, is rushing down to ever-deeper Baseness and Confusion, it is a dire necessity of Nature's to bring in her ARISTOCRACIES, her BEST, even by forcible methods. When their descendants or representatives cease entirely to *be* the Best, Nature's poor world will very soon rush down again to Baseness; and it becomes a dire necessity of nature's to cast them out. Hence French Revolutions, Five-point Charters, Democracies, and a mournful list of *Etceteras,* in these our afflicted times.

To what extent Democracy has now reached, how it advances irresistible with ominous, ever-increasing speed, he that will open his eyes on any province of human affairs may discern. Democracy is everywhere the inexorable demand of these ages, swiftly fulfilling itself. From the thunder of Napoleon battles, to the jabbering of Open-vestry in St. Mary Axe, all things announce Democracy. A distinguished man, whom some of my readers will hear again with pleasure, thus writes to me what in these days he notes from the Wahngasse of Weissnichtwo, where our London fashions seem to be in full vogue. Let us hear the Herr Teufelsdröckh again, were it but the smallest word!

'Democracy, which means despair of finding any Heroes to govern you, and contented putting-up with the want of them,— alas, thou too, *mein Lieber,* seest well how close it is of kin to *Atheism,* and other sad *Isms:* he who discovers no God whatever, how shall he discover Heroes, the visible Temples of God? — Strange enough meanwhile it is, to observe with what thoughtlessness, here in our rigidly Conservative Country, men rush into Democracy with full cry. Beyond doubt, his Excellenz the Titular-Herr Ritter Kauderwälsch von Pferdefuss-Quacksa'lber, he our distinguished Conservative Premier himself, and all but the thicker-headed of his Party, discern Democracy to be inevitable as death, and are even desperate of delaying it much!

'You cannot walk the streets without beholding Democracy announce itself: the very Tailor has become, if not prop-

erly Sansculottic, which to him would be ruinous, yet a Tailor unconsciously symbolizing, and prophesying with his scissors, the reign of Equality. What now is our fashionable coat? A thing of superfinest texture, of deeply meditated cut; with Malines-lace cuffs; quilted with gold; so that a man can carry, without difficulty, an estate of land on his back? *Keineswegs,* By no manner of means! The Sumptuary Laws have fallen into such a state of desuetude as was never before seen. Our fashionable coat is an amphibium between barn-sack and drayman's doublet. The cloth of it is studiously coarse; the color a speckled soot-black or rust-brown gray; the nearest approach to a Peasant's. And for shape, — thou shouldst see it! The last consummation of the year now passing over us is definable as Three Bags; a big bag for the body, two small bags for the arms, and by way of collar a hem! The first Antique Cheruscan who, of feltcloth or bear's-hide, with bone or metal needle, set about making himself a coat, before Tailors had yet awakened out of Nothing, — did not he make it even so? A loose wide poke for body, with two holes to let out the arms; this was his original coat: to which holes it was soon visible that two small loose pokes, or sleeves, easily appended, would be an improvement.

'Thus has the Tailor-art, so to speak, overset itself, like most other things; changed its center-of-gravity; whirled suddenly over from zenith to nadir. Your Stulz, with huge somerset, vaults from his high shopboard down to the depths of primal savagery, — carrying much along with him! For I will invite thee to reflect that the Tailor, as topmost ultimate froth of Human Society, is indeed swift-passing, evanescent, slippery to decipher; yet significant of much, nay of all. Topmost evanescent froth, he is churned-up from the very lees, and from all intermediate regions of the liquor. The general outcome he, visible to the eye, of what men aimed to do, and were obliged and enabled to do, in this one public department of symbolizing themselves to each other by covering of their skins. A smack of all Human Life lies in the Tailor: its wild struggles towards beauty, dignity, freedom, victory; and how, hemmed-in by Sedan and Huddersfield, by Nescience, Dulness, Prurience, and other sad necessities and laws of Nature, it has attained just to this: Gray savagery of Three Sacks with a hem!

'When the very Tailor verges towards Sansculottism, is it not ominous? The last Divinity of poor mankind dethroning himself; sinking *his* taper too, flame downmost, like the Genius of Sleep or of Death; admonitory that Tailor time shall be no more! — For, little as one could advise Sumptuary Laws at the present epoch, yet nothing is clearer than that where ranks do actually exist, strict division of costumes will also be enforced; that if we ever have a new Hierarchy and Aristocracy, acknowledged veritably as such, for which I daily pray Heaven, the Tailor will reawaken; and be, by volunteering and appointment, consciously and unconsciously, a safeguard of that same.' — Certain farther observations, from the same invaluable pen, on our never-ending changes of mode, our 'perpetual nomadic and even ape-like appetite for change and mere change' in all the equipments of our existence, and the 'fatal revolutionary character' thereby manifested, we suppress for the present. It may be admitted that Democracy, in all meanings of the word, is in full career; irresistible by any Ritter Kauderwälsch or other Son of Adam, as times go. 'Liberty' is a thing men are determined to have.

But truly, as I had to remark in the mean while, 'the liberty of not being oppressed by your fellow man' is an indispensable, yet one of the most insignificant fractional parts of Human Liberty. No man oppresses thee, can bid thee fetch or carry, come or go, without reason shown. True; from all men thou art emancipated: but from Thyself and from the Devil — ? No man, wiser, unwiser, can make thee come or go: but thy own futilities, bewilderments, thy false appetites for Money, Windsor Georges and suchlike? No man oppresses thee, O free and independent Franchiser: but does not this stupid Porter-pot oppress thee? No Son of Adam can bid thee come or go; but this absurd Pot of Heavy-wet, this can and does! Thou art the thrall not of Cedric

the Saxon, but of thy own brutal appetites and this scoured dish of liquor. And thou pratest of thy 'liberty'? Thou entire blockhead!

Heavy-wet and gin: alas, these are not the only kinds of thraldom. Thou who walkest in a vain show, looking out with ornamental dilettante sniff and serene supremacy at all Life and all Death; and amblest jauntily; perking up thy poor talk into crotchets, thy poor conduct into fatuous somnambulisms; — and *art* as an 'enchanted Ape' under God's sky, where thou mightest have been a man, had proper School-masters and Conquerors, and Constables with cat-o'-nine tails, been vouchsafed thee; dost thou call that 'liberty'? Or your unreposing Mammon-worshipper again, driven, as if by Galvanisms, by Devils and Fixed-Ideas, who rises early and sits late, chasing the impossible; straining every faculty to 'fill himself with the east wind,'— how merciful were it, could you, by mild persuasion, or by the severest tyranny so-called, check him in his mad path, and turn him into a wiser one! All painful tyranny, in that case again, were but mild 'surgery;' the pain of it cheap, as health and life, instead of galvanism and fixed-idea, are cheap at any price.

Sure enough, of all paths a man could strike into, there *is,* at any given moment, a *best path* for every man; a thing which, here and now, it were of all things *wisest* for him to do; — which could he be but led or driven to do, he were then doing 'like a man,' as we phrase it; all men and gods agreeing with him, the whole Universe virtually exclaiming Well-done to him! His success, in such case, were complete; his felicity a maximum. This path, to find this path and walk in it, is the one thing needful for him. Whatsoever forwards him in that, let it come to him even in the shape of blows and spurnings, is liberty: whatsoever hinders him, were it wardmotes, open-vestries, pollbooths, tremendous cheers, rivers of heavy-wet, is slavery.

The notion that a man's liberty consists in giving his vote at election-hustings, and saying, 'Behold, now I too have my twenty-thousandth part of a Talker in our National Palaver; will not all the gods be good to me?'— is one of the pleasantest! Nature nevertheless is kind at present; and puts it into the heads of many, almost of all. The liberty especially which has to purchase itself by social isolation, and each man standing separate from the other, having 'no business with him' but a cash-account: this is such a liberty as the Earth seldom saw; — as the Earth will not long put up with, recommend it how you may. This liberty turns out, before it have long continued in action, with all men flinging up their caps round it, to be, for the Working Millions a liberty to die by want of food; for the Idle Thousands and Units, alas, a still more fatal liberty to live in want of work; to have no earnest duty to do in this God's-World any more. What becomes of a man in such predicament? Earth's Laws are silent; and Heaven's speak in a voice which is not heard. No work, and the ineradicable need of work, give rise to new very wondrous life-philosophies, new very wondrous life-practices! Dilettantism, Pococurantism, Beau-Brummelism, with perhaps an occasional, half-mad, protesting burst of Byronism, establish themselves: at the end of a certain period,— if you go back to 'the Dead Sea,' there is, say our Moslem friends, a very strange 'Sabbath-day' transacting itself there! — Brethren, we know but imperfectly yet, after ages of Constitutional Government, what Liberty and Slavery are.

Democracy, the chase of Liberty in that direction, shall go its full course; unrestrainable by him of Pferdefuss-Quacksalber, or any of *his* household. The Toiling Millions of Mankind, in most vital need and passionate instinctive desire of Guidance, shall cast away False-Guidance; and hope, for an hour, that No-Guidance will suffice them: but it can be for an hour only. The smallest item of human Slavery is the oppression of man by his Mock-Superiors; the palpablest, but I say at bottom the smallest. Let him shake-off such oppression, trample it indignantly under his feet; I blame him not, I pity and commend him. But oppression by your Mock-Superiors well shaken off, the grand problem yet remains to solve: That of finding government by your Real-Superiors! Alas, how shall we ever learn the solution of that, benighted, bewildered, sniffing, sneering, godforgetting unfortunates as we are?

It is a work for centuries; to be taught us by tribulations, confusions, insurrections, obstructions; who knows if not by conflagration and despair! It is a lesson inclusive of all other lessons; the hardest of all lessons to learn.

One thing I do know: Those Apes, chattering on the branches by the Dead Sea, never got it learned; but chatter there to this day. To them no Moses need come a second time; a thousand Moseses would be but so many painted Phantasms, interesting Fellow-Apes of new strange aspect,—whom they would 'invite to dinner,' be glad to meet with in lion-soirées. To them the voice of Prophecy, of heavenly monition, is quite ended. They chatter there, all Heaven shut to them, to the end of the world. The unfortunates! Oh, what is dying of hunger, with honest tools in your hand, with a manful purpose in your heart, and much real labor lying round you done, in comparison? You honestly quit your tools; quit a most muddy confused coil of sore work, short rations, of sorrows, dispiritments and contradictions, having now honestly done with it all;—and await, not entirely in a distracted manner, what the Supreme Powers, and the Silences and the Eternities may have to say to you.

A second thing I know: This lesson will have to be learned,—under penalties! England will either learn it, or England also will cease to exist among Nations. England will either learn to reverence its Heroes, and discriminate them from its Sham-Heroes and Valets and gaslighted Histrios; and to prize them as the audible God's-voice, amid all inane jargons and temporary market-cries, and say to them with heart-loyalty, 'Be ye King and Priest, and Gospel and Guidance for us:' or else England will continue to worship new and ever-new forms of Quackhood,—and so, with what resiliences and reboundings matters little, go down to the Father of Quacks! Can I dread such things of England? Wretched, thick-eyed, gross-hearted mortals, why will ye worship lies, and 'Stuffed Clothes-suits created by the ninth-parts of men'! It is not your purses that suffer; your farm-rents, your commerces, your mill-revenues, loud as ye lament over these; no, it is not these alone, but a far deeper than these: it is your souls that lie dead, crushed down under despicable Nightmares, Atheisms, Brain-fumes; and are not souls at all, but mere succedanea for *salt* to keep your bodies and their appetites from putrefying! Your cotton-spinning and thrice-miraculous mechanism, what is this too, by itself, but a larger kind of Animalism? Spiders can spin, Beavers can build and show contrivance; the Ant lays-up accumulation of capital, and has, for aught I know, a Bank of Antland. If there is no soul in man higher than all that, did it reach to sailing on the cloud-rack and spinning seasand; then I say, man is but an animal, a more cunning kind of brute: he has no soul, but only a succedaneum for salt. Whereupon, seeing himself to be truly of the beasts that perish, he ought to admit it, I think;—and also straightway universally to kill himself; and so, in a manlike manner at least *end,* and wave these brute-worlds *his* dignified farewell!—

* * *

BOOK IV

CHAPTER VIII

THE DIDACTIC

Certainly it were a fond imagination to expect that any preaching of mine could abate Mammonism; that Bobus of Houndsditch will love his guineas less, or his poor soul more, for any preaching of mine! But there is one Preacher who does preach with effect, and gradually persuade all persons: his name is Destiny, is Divine Providence, and his Sermon the inflexible Course of Things. Experience does take dreadfully high school-wages; but he teaches like no other!

I revert to Friend Prudence the good Quaker's refusal of 'seven thousand pounds to boot.' Friend Prudence's practical conclusion will, by degrees, become that of all rational practical men whatsoever. On the present scheme and principle, Work cannot continue. Trades' Strikes, Trades' Unions, Chartisms; mutiny, squalor, rage and desperate revolt, growing ever more desperate, will go on their way. As dark misery settles down

on us, and our refuges of lies fall in pieces one after one, the hearts of men, now at last serious, will turn to refuges of truth. The eternal stars shine out again, so soon as it is dark *enough*.

Begirt with desperate Trades' Unionism and Anarchic Mutiny, many an Industrial *Law-ward*, by and by, who has neglected to make laws and keep them, will be heard saying to himself: 'Why have I realized five hundred thousand pounds? I rose early and sat late, I toiled and moiled, and in the sweat of my brow and of my soul I strove to gain this money, that I might become conspicuous, and have some honor among my fellow-creatures. I wanted them to honor me, to love me. The money is here, earned with my best lifeblood; but the honor? I am encircled with squalor, with hunger, rage, and sooty desperation. Not honored, hardly even envied; only fools and the flunky-species so much as envy me. I am conspicuous, — as a mark for curses and brickbats. What good is it? My five hundred scalps hang here in my wigwam; would to Heaven I had sought something else than the scalps; would to Heaven I had been a Christian Fighter, not a Chactaw one! To have ruled and fought not in a Mammonish but in a Godlike spirit; to have had the hearts of the people bless me, as a true ruler and captain of my people; to have felt my own heart bless me, and that God above instead of Mammon below was blessing me,— this had been something. Out of my sight, ye beggarly five hundred scalps of banker's-thousands: I will try for something other, or account my life a tragical futility!'

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But truly it is beautiful to see the brutish empire of Mammon cracking everywhere; giving sure promise of dying, or of being changed. A strange, chill, almost ghastly dayspring strikes up in Yankeeland itself: my Transcendental friends announce there, in a distinct, though somewhat lankhaired, ungainly manner, that the Demiurgus Dollar is dethroned; that new unheard-of Demiurgusships, Priesthoods, Aristocracies, Growths and Destructions are already visible in the gray of coming Time. Chronos is dethroned by Jove; Odin by St. Olaf: the Dollar cannot rule in Heaven forever. No; I reckon not. Socinian Preachers quit their pulpits in Yankeeland, saying, 'Friends, this is all gone to colored cobweb, we regret to say!'— and retire into the fields to cultivate onion-beds, and live frugally on vegetables. It is very notable. Old godlike Calvinism declares that its old body is now fallen to tatters, and done; and its mournful ghost, disembodied, seeking new embodiment, pipes again in the winds; — a ghost and spirit as yet, but heralding new Spirit-worlds, and better Dynasties than the Dollar one.

Yes, here as there, light is coming into the world; men love not darkness, they do love light. A deep feeling of the eternal nature of Justice looks out among us everywhere,— even through the dull eyes of Exeter Hall; an unspeakable religiousness struggles, in the most helpless manner, to speak itself, in Puseyisms and the like. Of our Cant, all condemnable, how much is not condemnable without pity; we had almost said, without respect! The *in*articulate worth and truth that is in England goes down yet to the Foundations.

Some 'Chivalry of Labor,' some noble Humanity and practical Divineness of Labor, will yet be realized on this Earth. Or why *will;* why do we pray to Heaven, without setting our own shoulder to the wheel? The Present, if it will have the Future accomplish, shall itself commence. Thou who prophesiest, who believest, begin thou to fulfil. Here or nowhere, now equally as at any time! That outcast help-needing thing or person, trampled down under vulgar feet or hoofs, no help 'possible' for it, no prize offered for the saving of it,— canst not thou save it, then, without prize? Put forth thy hand, in God's name; know that 'impossible,' where Truth and Mercy and the everlasting Voice of Natural order, has no place in the brave man's dictionary. That when all men have said 'Impossible,' and tumbled noisily elsewhither, and thou alone art left, then first thy time and possibility have come. It is for thee now; do thou that, and ask no man's counsel, but thy own only, and God's. Brother, thou hast possibility in thee for much: the possibility of writing on the eternal skies the record of a heroic like. That noble downfallen or yet un-

born 'Impossibility,' thou canst lift it up, thou canst, by thy soul's travail, bring it into clear being. That loud inane Actuality, with millions in its pocket, too 'possible' that, which rolls along there, with quilted trumpeters blaring round it, and all the world escorting it as mute or vocal flunky,— escort it not thou; say to it, either nothing, or else deeply in thy heart: 'Loud-blaring Nonentity, no force of trumpets, cash, Long-acre art, or universal flunkyhood of men, makes thee an Entity; thou art a *Non*entity, and deceptive Simulacrum, more accursed than thou seemest. Pass on in the Devil's name, unworshipped by at least one man, and leave the thoroughfare clear!'

Not on Ilion's or Latium's plains; on far other plains and places henceforth can noble deeds be now done. Not on Ilion's plains; how much less in Mayfair's drawingrooms! Not in victory over poor brother French or Phrygians; but in victory over Frost-jötuns, Marshgiants, over demons of Discord, Idleness, Injustice, Unreason, and Chaos come again. None of the old Epics is longer possible. The Epic of French and Phrygians was comparatively a small Epic; but that of Flirts and Fribbles, what is that? A thing that vanishes at cock-crowing,— that already begins to scent the morning air. Gamepreserving Aristocracies, let them 'bush' never so effectually, cannot escape the Subtle Fowler. Game seasons will be excellent, and again will be indifferent, and by and by they will not be at all. The Last Partridge of England, of an England where millions of men can get no corn to eat, will be shot and ended. Aristocracies with beards on their chins will find other work to do than amuse themselves with trundling-hoops.

But it is to you, ye Workers, who do already work, and are as grown men, noble and honorable in a sort, that the whole world calls for new work and nobleness. Subdue mutiny, discord, wide spread despair, by manfulness, justice, mercy and wisdom. Chaos is dark, deep as Hell; let light be, and there is instead a green flowery World. Oh, it is great, and there is no other greatness. To make some nook of God's Creation a little fruitfuller, better, more worthy of God; to make some human hearts a little wiser, manfuller, happier,— more blessed, less accursed! It is work for a God. Sooty Hell of mutiny and savagery and despair can, by man's energy, be made a kind of Heaven; cleared of its soot, of its mutiny, of its need to mutiny; the everlasting arch of Heaven's azure overspanning *it* too, and its cunning mechanisms and tall chimney-steeples, as a birth of Heaven; God and all men looking on it well pleased.

Unstained by wasteful deformities, by wasted tears or heart's-blood of men, or any defacement of the Pit, noble fruitful Labor, growing ever nobler, will come forth,— the grand sole miracle of Man; whereby Man has risen from the low places of this Earth, very literally, into divine Heavens. Ploughers, Spinners, Builders; Prophets, Poets, Kings; Brindleys and Goethes, Odins and Arkwrights; all martyrs, and noble men, and gods are of one grand Host; immeasurable; marching ever forward since the beginnings of the World. The enormous, all-conquering, flame-crowned Host, noble every soldier in it; sacred, and alone noble. Let him who is not of it hide himself; let him tremble for himself. Stars at every button cannot make him noble; sheaves of Bath-garters, nor bushels of Georges; nor any other contrivance but manfully enlisting in it, valiantly taking place and step in it. O Heavens, will he not bethink himself; he too is so needed in the Host! It were so blessed, thrice-blessed, for himself and for us all! In hope of the Last Partridge, and some Duke of Weimar among our English Dukes, we will be patient yet a while.

The Future hides in it
Gladness and sorrow;
We press still thorow,
Naught that abides in it
Daunting us,— onward.

* * *

(1843)

JOHN RUSKIN (1819–1900)

Ruskin's literary career divides itself into two periods: in the first, his supreme interest was art; in the second, his attention was chiefly directed to social problems and ethical teaching. When he was only seventeen his indignation was aroused by the current depreciation of the great landscape painter, Turner, to whom he wrote offering his pen in defence. The offer was declined, but this youthful project was realized in *Modern Painters*, the first volume of which Ruskin published when he was twenty-four, and the sixth when he was forty-one. His main principles are that truth is the standard of all excellence, and nature the inspiration of all great art; he applies these tests to establish the conclusion that Turner is the only perfect landscape painter the world has ever seen. In the midst of this undertaking, which was expanded far beyond its original object, Ruskin wrote *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* — (Sacrifice, Truth, Power, Beauty, Life, Memory, Obedience). He developed his ideas further in *The Stones of Venice*, in which he defended Gothic architecture on the same grounds as he had defended Turner — truthfulness and the love of nature. These works and the successive volumes of *Modern Painters* gave him an unprecedented position as an art critic, but he was already beginning to turn his attention to other subjects. He was greatly influenced by Carlyle, with whom he formed a close friendship; and he was deeply interested in the Workmen's College conducted by Maurice and Kingsley, writing for his pupils there *The Elements of Drawing* and *The Elements of Perspective*. In 1857 he said that the kind of painting they wanted in London was painting cheeks red with health, and in the same year he gave fuller utterance to his new ideas in a course of lectures at Manchester on 'The Political Economy of Art.' Four essays which appeared in *The Cornhill Magazine* in 1860 (afterwards republished under the title *Unto This Last*) were even more outspoken, and caused so much dissatisfaction that the editor refused to continue the series; *Fraser's Magazine* a little later took the same course with the papers now included in Ruskin's works as *Munera Pulveris*. He advocated the application of christian principles to the organization of labor, and condemned the accepted political economy of the day as self-seeking and unsound. His idea of political economy was that it was not an abstract science, but 'a system of conduct founded on the sciences, and impossible, except under certain conditions of moral culture.' He accordingly devoted his main energies henceforth to arousing the upper classes to a sense of their duties to the poor, and helping the lower classes to realize their opportunities. To this end he wrote, gave his money, and labored with his own hands. *Time and Tide by Weare and Tyne* and *Fors Clavigera* are letters to workingmen; *Sesame and Lilies* and *The Crown of Wild Olive* are lectures delivered in various parts of England, dealing with political, social, and economical questions. He held the Professorship of Fine Art at Oxford for many years, and his courses there were the foundation of several of his later works on art; after his retirement he wrote a series of sketches of his past life under the title *Præterita* (things gone by). His last years were spent in seclusion at Brantwood, on the shores of Coniston Water in the Lake District. On his eightieth birthday Edward, Prince of Wales, headed an address which was signed by the most distinguished men of the time to assure Ruskin of their 'deepest respect and sincerest affection.' While there have been wide differences of opinion about his theories of art and his views of political economy and social reform, his entire singleness of aim and his preëminence as a writer of English prose are beyond dispute.

TRAFFIC

(A lecture delivered in the Town Hall, Bradford, afterwards included in The Crown of Wild Olive)

My good Yorkshire friends, you asked me down here among your hills that I might talk to you about this Exchange you are going to build: but earnestly and seriously asking you to pardon me, I am going to do nothing of the kind. I cannot talk, or at least can say very little, about this same Exchange. I must talk of quite other things, though not willingly; — I could not deserve your pardon, if when you invited me to speak on one

subject, I *wilfully* spoke on another. But I cannot speak, to purpose, of anything about which I do not care; and most simply and sorrowfully I have to tell you, in the outset, that I do *not* care about this Exchange of yours.

If, however, when you sent me your invitation, I had answered, 'I won't come, I don't care about the Exchange of Bradford,' you would have been justly offended with me, not knowing the reasons of so blunt a carelessness. So I have come down, hoping that you will patiently let me tell you why, on this, and many other such occasions, I now remain silent, when formerly I should have caught at the opportunity of speaking to a gracious audience.

In a word, then, I do not care about this Exchange,— because *you* don't; and because you know perfectly well I cannot make you. Look at the essential conditions of the case, which you, as business men, know perfectly well, though perhaps you think I forget them. You are going to spend £30,000, which to you, collectively, is nothing; the buying a new coat is, as to the cost of it, a much more important matter of consideration to me than building a new Exchange is to you. But you think you may as well have the right thing for your money. You know there are a great many odd styles of architecture about; you don't want to do anything ridiculous; you hear of me, among others, as a respectable architectural man-milliner; and you send for me, that I may tell you the leading fashion; and what is, in our shops, for the moment, the newest and sweetest thing in pinnacles.

Now, pardon me for telling you frankly, you cannot have good architecture merely by asking people's advice on occasion. All good architecture is the expression of national life and character; and it is produced by a prevalent and eager national taste, or desire for beauty. And I want you to think a little of the deep significance of this word 'taste;' for no statement of mine has been more earnestly or oftener controverted than that good taste is essentially a moral quality. 'No,' say many of my antagonists, 'taste is one thing, morality is another. Tell us what is pretty: we shall be glad to know that; but we need no sermons even were you able to preach them, which may be doubted.'

Permit me, therefore, to fortify this old dogma of mine somewhat. Taste is not only a part and an index of morality —it is the ONLY morality. The first, and last, and closest trial question to any living creature is, 'What do you like?' Tell me what you like, and I'll tell you what you are. Go out into the street, and ask the first man or woman you meet, what their 'taste' is, and if they answer candidly, you know them, body and soul. 'You, my friend in the rags, with the unsteady gait, what do *you* like?' 'A pipe and a quartern of gin.' I know you. 'You, good woman, with the quick step and tidy bonnet, what do you like?' 'A swept hearth and a clean tea-table, and my husband opposite me, and a baby at my breast.' Good, I know you also. 'You, little girl with the golden hair and the soft eyes, what do you like?' 'My canary, and a run among the wood hyacinths.' 'You, little boy with the dirty hands and the low forehead, what do you like?' 'A shy at the sparrows, and a game at pitch farthing.' Good; we know them all now. What more need we ask?

'Nay,' perhaps you answer: 'we need rather to ask what these people and children do, than what they like. If they *do* right, it is no matter that they like what is wrong; and if they *do* wrong, it is no matter that they like what is right. Doing is the great thing; and it does not matter that the man likes drinking, so that he does not drink; nor that the little girl likes to be kind to her canary, if she will not learn her lessons; nor that the little boy likes throwing stones at the sparrows, if he goes to the Sunday School.' Indeed, for a short time, and in a provisional sense, this is true. For if, resolutely, people do what is right, in time they come to like doing it. But they only are in a right moral state when they *have* come to like doing it; and as long as they don't like it, they are still in a vicious state. The man is not in health of body who is always thinking of the bottle in the cupboard, though he bravely bears his thirst; but the man who heartily enjoys water in the morning and wine in the evening, each in its proper quantity and time. And the entire object of

true education is to make people not merely *do* the right things, but *enjoy* the right things — not merely industrious, but to love industry — not merely learned, but to love knowledge — not merely pure, but to love purity — not merely just, but to hunger and thirst after justice.

But you may answer or think, 'Is the liking for outside ornaments,— for pictures, or statues, or furniture, or architecture,— a moral quality?' Yes, most surely, if a rightly set liking. Taste for *any* pictures or statues is not a moral quality, but taste for good ones is. Only here again we have to define the word 'good.' I don't mean by 'good,' clever — or learned — or difficult in the doing. Take a picture by Teniers, of sots quarreling over their dice: it is an entirely clever picture; so clever that nothing in its kind has ever been done equal to it; but it is also an entirely base and evil picture. It is an expression of delight in the prolonged contemplation of a vile thing, and delight in that is an 'unmannered,' or 'immoral' quality. It is 'bad taste' in the profoundest sense — it is the taste of the devils. On the other hand, a picture of Titian's, or a Greek statue, or a Greek coin, or a Turner landscape, expresses delight in the perpetual contemplation of a good and perfect thing. That is an entirely moral quality — it is the taste of the angels. And all delight in fine art, and all love of it, resolve themselves into simple love of that which deserves love. That deserving is the quality which we call 'loveliness'— (we ought to have an opposite word, hateliness, to be said of the things which deserve to be hated); and it is not an indifferent nor optional thing whether we love this or that; but it is just the vital function of all our being. What we *like* determines what we *are*, and is the sign of what we are; and to teach taste is inevitably to form character.

As I was thinking over this, in walking up Fleet Street the other day, my eye caught the title of a book standing open in a bookseller's window. It was — 'On the necessity of the diffusion of taste among all classes.' 'Ah,' I thought to myself, 'my classifying friend, when you have diffused your taste, where will your classes be? The man who likes what you like, belongs to the same class with you, I think. Inevitably so. You may put him to other work if you choose; but, by the condition you have brought him into, he will dislike the other work as much as you would yourself. You get hold of a scavenger, or a costermonger, who enjoyed the Newgate Calendar for literature, and 'Pop goes the Weasel' for music. You think you can make him like Dante and Beethoven? I wish you joy of your lessons; but if you do, you have made a gentleman of him: — he won't like to go back to his costermongering.'

And so completely and unexceptionally is this so, that, if I had time to-night, I could show you that a nation cannot be affected by any vice, or weakness, without expressing it, legibly, and forever, either in bad art, or by want of art; and that there is no national virtue, small or great, which is not manifestly expressed in all the art which circumstances enable the people possessing that virtue to produce. Take, for instance, your great English virtue of enduring and patient courage. You have at present in England only one art of any consequence — that is, iron-working. You know thoroughly well how to cast and hammer iron. Now, do you think in those masses of lava which you build volcanic cones to melt, and which you forge at the mouths of the Infernos you have created; do you think, on those iron plates, your courage and endurance are not written forever — not merely with an iron pen, but on iron parchment? And take also your great English vice — European vice — vice of all the world — vice of all other worlds that roll or shine in heaven, bearing with them yet the atmosphere of hell — the vice of jealousy, which brings competition into your commerce, treachery into your councils, and dishonor into your wars — that vice which has rendered for you, and for your next neighboring nation, the daily occupations of existence no longer possible, but with the mail upon your breasts and the sword loose in its sheath; so that at last, you have realized for all the multitudes of the two great peoples who lead the so-called civilization of the earth,— you have realized for them all. I say, in person

and in policy, what was once true only of the rough Border riders of your Cheviot hills —

> They carved at the meal
> With gloves of steel,
> And they drank the red wine through the helmet barred; —

do you think that this national shame and dastardliness of heart are not written as legibly on every rivet of your iron armor as the strength of the right hands that forged it?

Friends, I know not whether this thing be the more ludicrous or the more melancholy. It is quite unspeakably both. Suppose, instead of being now sent for by you, I had been sent for by some private gentleman, living in a suburban house, with his garden separated only by a fruit-wall from his next door neighbor's; and he had called me to consult with him on the furnishing of his drawing room. I begin looking about me, and find the walls rather bare; I think such and such a paper might be desirable — perhaps a little fresco here and there on the ceiling — a damask curtain or so at the windows. 'Ah,' says my employer, 'damask curtains, indeed! That's all very fine, but you know I can't afford that kind of thing just now!' 'Yet the world credits you with a splendid income!' 'Ah, yes,' says my friend, 'but do you know, at present, I am obliged to spend it nearly all in steel-traps?' 'Steel-traps! for whom?' 'Why, for that fellow on the other side of the wall, you know: we're very good friends, but we are obliged to keep our traps set on both sides of the wall; we could not possibly keep on friendly terms without them, and our spring guns. The worst of it is, we are both clever fellows enough; and there's never a day passes that we don't find out a new trap, or a new gun-barrel, or something; we spend about fifteen millions a year each in our traps, take it all together; and I don't see how we're to do with less.' A highly comic state of life for two private gentlemen! but for two nations, it seems to me, not wholly comic? Bedlam would be comic, perhaps, if there were only one madman in it; and your Christmas pantomime is comic, when there is only one clown in it; but when the whole world turns clown, and paints itself red with its own heart's blood instead of vermilion, it is something else than comic, I think.

Mind, I know a great deal of this is play, and willingly allow for that. You don't know what to do with yourselves for a sensation: fox-hunting and cricketing will not carry you through the whole of this unendurably long mortal life: you liked pop-guns when you were schoolboys, and rifles and Armstrongs are only the same things better made: but then the worst of it is, that what was play to you when boys, was not play to the sparrows; and what is play to you now, is not play to the small birds of State neither; and for the black eagles, you are somewhat shy of taking shots at them, if I mistake not.

I must get back to the matter in hand, however. Believe me, without farther instance, I could show you, in all time, that every nation's vice, or virtue, was written in its art: the soldiership of early Greece; the sensuality of late Italy; the visionary religion of Tuscany; the splendid human energy and beauty of Venice. I have no time to do this tonight (I have done it elsewhere before now); but I proceed to apply the principle to ourselves in a more searching manner.

I notice that among all the new buildings which cover your once wild hills, churches and schools are mixed in due, that is to say, in large proportion, with your mills and mansions; and I notice also that the churches and schools are almost always Gothic, and the mansions and mills are never Gothic. Will you allow me to ask precisely the meaning of this? For, remember, it is peculiarly a modern phenomenon. When Gothic was invented, houses were Gothic as well as churches; and when the Italian style superseded the Gothic, churches were Italian as well as houses. If there is a Gothic spire to the cathedral of Antwerp, there is a Gothic belfry to the Hôtel de Ville at Brussels; if Inigo Jones builds an Italian Whitehall, Sir Christopher Wren builds an Italian St. Paul's. But now you live under one school of architecture, and worship under another. What do you mean by doing this? Am I

to understand that you are thinking of changing your architecture back to Gothic; and that you treat your churches experimentally, because it does not matter what mistakes you make in a church? Or am I to understand that you consider Gothic a pre-eminently sacred and beautiful mode of building, which you think, like the fine frankincense, should be mixed for the tabernacle only, and reserved for your religious services? For if this be the feeling, though it may seem at first as if it were graceful and reverent, at the root of the matter, it signifies neither more nor less than that you have separated your religion from your life.

For consider what a wide significance this fact has; and remember that it is not you only, but all the people of England, who are behaving thus just now.

You have all got into the habit of calling the church 'the house of God.' I have seen, over the doors of many churches, the legend actually carved, '*This* is the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.' Now, note where that legend comes from, and of what place it was first spoken. A boy leaves his father's house to go on a long journey on foot, to visit his uncle; he has to cross a wild hill-desert; just as if one of your own boys had to cross the wolds to visit an uncle at Carlisle. The second or third day your boy finds himself somewhere between Hawes and Brough, in the midst of the moors, at sunset. It is stony ground, and boggy; he cannot go one foot farther that night. Down he lies, to sleep, on Wharnside, where best he may, gathering a few of the stones together to put under his head; — so wild the place is, he cannot get anything but stones. And there, lying under the broad night, he has a dream; and he sees a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reaches to heaven, and the angels of God are seen ascending and descending upon it. And when he wakes out of his sleep, he says, 'How dreadful is this place; surely, this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.' This PLACE, observe; not this church; not this city; not this stone, even, which he puts up for a memorial — the piece of flint on which his head has lain. But this *place;* this windy slope of Wharnside; this moorland hollow, torrent-bitten, snow-blighted; this *any* place where God lets down the ladder. And how are you to know where that will be? or how are you to determine where it may be, but by being ready for it always? Do you know where the lightning is to fall next? You *do* know that, partly; you can guide the lightning; but you cannot guide the going forth of the Spirit, which is as that lightning when it shines from the east to the west.

But the perpetual and insolent warping of that strong verse to serve a merely ecclesiastical purpose, is only one of the thousand instances in which we sink back into gross Judaism. We call our churches 'temples.' Now, you know perfectly well they are *not* temples. They have never had, never can have, anything whatever to do with temples. They are 'synagogues'—'gathering places'—where you gather yourselves together as an assembly; and by not calling them so, you again miss the force of another mighty text—'Thou, when thou prayest, shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the *churches'* (we should translate it), 'that they may be seen of men. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father,'— which is, not in chancel nor in aisle, but 'in secret.'

Now, you feel, as I say this to you — I know you feel — as if I were trying to take away the honor of your churches. Not so; I am trying to prove to you the honor of your houses and your hills; not that the Church is not sacred — but that the whole Earth is. I would have you feel, what careless, what constant, what infectious sin there is in all modes of thought, whereby, in calling your churches only 'holy,' you call your hearths and homes 'profane'; and have separated yourselves from the heathen by casting all your household gods to the ground, instead of recognizing, in the place of their many and feeble Lares, the presence of your One and Mighty Lord and Lar.

'But what has all this to do with our Exchange?' you ask me, impatiently. My dear friends, it has just everything to do with it; on these inner and great questions depend all the outer and little ones; and if you have asked me down

here to speak to you, because you had before been interested in anything I have written, you must know that all I have yet said about architecture was to show this. The book I called 'The Seven Lamps' was to show that certain right states of temper and moral feeling were the magic powers by which all good architecture, without exception, had been produced. 'The Stones of Venice' had, from beginning to end, no other aim than to show that the Gothic architecture of Venice had arisen out of, and indicated in all its features, a state of pure national faith, and of domestic virtue; and that its Renaissance architecture had arisen out of, and in all its features indicated, a state of concealed national infidelity, and of domestic corruption. And now, you ask me what style is best to build in; and how can I answer, knowing the meaning of the two styles, but by another question — do you mean to build as Christians or as Infidels? And still more — do you mean to build as honest Christians or as honest Infidels? as thoroughly and confessedly either one or the other? You don't like to be asked such rude questions. I cannot help it; they are of much more importance than this Exchange business; and if they can be at once answered, the Exchange business settles itself in a moment. But, before I press them farther, I must ask leave to explain one point clearly.

In all my past work, my endeavor has been to show that good architecture is essentially religious — the production of a faithful and virtuous, not of an infidel and corrupted people. But in the course of doing this, I have had also to show that good architecture is not *ecclesiastical*. People are so apt to look upon religion as the business of the clergy, not their own, that the moment they hear of anything depending on 'religion,' they think it must also have depended on the priesthood; and I have had to take what place was to be occupied between these two errors, and fight both, often with seeming contradiction. Good architecture is the work of good and believing men; therefore, you say, at least some people say, 'Good architecture must essentially have been the work of the clergy, not of the laity.' No — a thousand times no; good architecture[1] has always been the work of the commonalty, *not* of the clergy. What, you say, those glorious cathedrals — the pride of Europe — did their builders not form Gothic architecture? No; they corrupted Gothic architecture. Gothic was formed in the baron's castle, and the burgher's street. It was formed by the thoughts, and hands, and powers of free citizens and warrior kings. By the monk it was used as an instrument for the aid of his superstition; when that superstition became a beautiful madness, and the best hearts of Europe vainly dreamed and pined in the cloister, and vainly raged and perished in the crusade — through that fury of perverted faith and wasted war, the Gothic rose also to its loveliest, most fantastic, and, finally, most foolish dreams; and, in those dreams, was lost.

I hope, now, that there is no risk of your misunderstanding me when I come to the gist of what I want to say to-night; — when I repeat, that every great national architecture has been the result and exponent of a great national religion. You can't have bits of it here, bits there — you must have it everywhere, or nowhere. It is not the monopoly of a clerical company — it is not the exponent of a theological dogma — it is not the hieroglyphic writing of an initiated priesthood; it is the manly language of a people inspired by resolute and common purpose, and rendering resolute and common fidelity to the legible laws of an undoubted God.

Now, there have as yet been three distinct schools of European architecture. I say, European, because Asiatic and African architectures belong so entirely to other races and climates, that there is no question of them here; only, in passing, I will simply assure you that whatever is good or great in Egypt, and Syria, and India, is just good or great for the same reasons as the buildings on our side of the Bosphorus. We Europeans, then, have had three great religions: the Greek, which was the worship of the God of Wisdom and Power; the Medieval, which was the Worship of the God of Judgment and Consolation; the Renaissance, which was the worship of the God of Pride and Beauty:

[1] And all other arts, for the most part; even of incredulous and secularly-minded commonalties.

these three we have had — they are past, — and now, at last, we English have got a fourth religion, and a God of our own, about which I want to ask you. But I must explain these three old ones first.

I repeat, first, the Greeks essentially worshipped the God of Wisdom; so that whatever contended against their religion, — to the Jews a stumbling block,— was, to the Greeks — *Foolishness*.

The first Greek idea of Deity was that expressed in the word, of which we keep the remnant in our words '*Di*-urnal' and '*Di*-vine'— the god of *Day*, Jupiter the revealer. Athena is his daughter, but especially daughter of the Intellect, springing armed from the head. We are only with the help of recent investigation beginning to penetrate the depth of meaning couched under the Athenaic symbols: but I may note rapidly, that her ægis, the mantle with the serpent fringes, in which she often, in the best statues, is represented as folding up her left hand for better guard, and the Gorgon on her shield, are both representative mainly of the chilling horror and sadness (turning men to stone, as it were,) of the outmost and superficial spheres of knowledge — that knowledge which separates, in bitterness, hardness, and sorrow, the heart of the full-grown man from the heart of the child. For out of imperfect knowledge spring terror, dissension, danger, and disdain; but from perfect knowledge, given by the full-revealed Athena, strength and peace, in sign of which she is crowned with the olive spray, and bears the resistless spear.

This, then, was the Greek conception of purest Deity, and every habit of life, and every form of his art developed themselves from the seeking this bright, serene, resistless wisdom; and setting himself, as a man, to do things evermore rightly and strongly;[1] not with any ardent affection or ultimate hope; but with a resolute and continent energy of will, as knowing that for failure there was no consolation, and for sin there was no remission. And the Greek architecture rose unerring, bright, clearly defined, and self-contained.

Next followed in Europe the great Christian faith, which was essentially the religion of Comfort. Its great doctrine is the remission of sins; for which cause it happens, too often, in certain phases of Christianity, that sin and sickness themselves are partly glorified, as if, the more you had to be healed of, the more divine was the healing. The practical result of this doctrine, in art, is a continual contemplation of sin and disease, and of imaginary states of purification from them; thus we have an architecture conceived in a mingled sentiment of melancholy and aspiration, partly severe, partly luxuriant, which will bend itself to every one of our needs, and every one of our fancies, and be strong or weak with us, as we are strong or weak ourselves. It is, of all architecture, the basest, when base people build it — of all, the noblest, when built by the noble.

And now note that both these religions — Greek and Medieval — perished by falsehood in their own main purpose. The Greek religion of Wisdom perished in a false philosophy — 'Oppositions of science, falsely so called.' The Mediæval religion of Consolation perished in false comfort; in remission of sins given lyingly. It was the selling of absolution that ended the Medieval faith; and I can tell you more, it is the selling of absolution which, to the end of time, will mark false Christianity. Pure Christianity gives her remission of sins only by *ending* them; but false Christianity gets her remission of sins by *compounding for* them. And there are many ways of compounding for them. We English have beautiful little quiet ways of buying absolution, whether in low Church, or high, far more cunning than any of Tetzel's trading.

Then, thirdly, there followed the religion of Pleasure, in which all Europe gave itself to luxury, ending in death. First, *bals masqués* in every saloon, and then guillotines in every square. And all these three worships issue in vast

[1] It is an error to suppose that the Greek worship, or seeking, was chiefly of Beauty. It was essentially of Rightness and Strength, founded on Forethought: the principal character of Greek art is not Beauty, but design: and the Dorian Apollo-worship and Athenian Virgin-worship are both expressions of adoration of divine Wisdom and Purity. Next to these great deities rank, in power over the national mind, Dionysus and Ceres, the givers of human strength and life: then, for heroic example, Hercules. There is no Venus-worship among the Greeks in the great times: and the Muses are essentially teachers of Truth, and of its harmonies. Compare Aratra Pentelici, § 200.

temple building. Your Greek worshipped Wisdom, and built you the Parthenon — the Virgin's temple. The Medieval worshipped Consolation, and built you Virgin temples also — but to our Lady of Salvation. Then the Revivalist worshipped beauty, of a sort, and built you Versailles, and the Vatican. Now, lastly, will you tell me what *we* worship, and what *we* build?

You know we are speaking always of the real, active, continual, national worship; that by which men act while they live; not that which they talk of when they die. Now, we have, indeed, a nominal religion, to which we pay tithes of property and sevenths of time; but we have also a practical and earnest religion, to which we devote nine-tenths of our property and sixth-sevenths of our time. And we dispute a great deal about the nominal religion; but we are all unanimous about this practical one, of which I think you will admit that the ruling goddess may be best generally described as the 'Goddess of Getting-on,' or 'Britannia of the Market.' The Athenians had an 'Athena Agoraia,' or Athena of the Market: but she was a subordinate type of their goddess, while our Britannia Agoraia is the principal type of ours. And all your great architectural works, are, of course, built to her. It is long since you built a great cathedral; and how you would laugh at me, if I proposed building a cathedral on the top of one of these hills of yours, to make it an Acropolis! But your railroad mounds, vaster than the walls of Babylon; your railroad stations, vaster than the temple of Ephesus, and innumerable; your chimneys how much more mighty and costly than cathedral spires! your harbor piers; your warehouses; your exchanges! — all these are built to your great Goddess of 'Getting-on'; and she has formed, and will continue to form, your architecture, as long as you worship her; and it is quite vain to ask me to tell you how to build to *her;* you know far better than I.

There might indeed, on some theories, be a conceivably good architecture for Exchanges — that is to say, if there were any heroism in the fact or deed of exchange, which might be typically carved on the outside of your building. For, you know, all beautiful architecture must be adorned with sculpture or painting; and for sculpture or painting, you must have a subject. And hitherto it has been a received opinion among the nations of the world that the only right subjects for either, were *heroisms* of some sort. Even on his pots and his flagons, the Greek put a Hercules slaying lions, or an Apollo slaying serpents, or Bacchus slaying melancholy giants, and earth-born despondencies. On his temples, the Greek put contests of great warriors in founding states, or of gods with evil spirits. On his houses and temples alike, the Christian put carvings of angels conquering devils; or of hero-martyrs exchanging this world for another; subjects inappropriate, I think, to our direction of exchange here. And the Master of Christians not only left his followers without any orders as to the sculpture of affairs of exchange on the outside of buildings, but gave some strong evidence of his dislike of affairs of exchange within them. And yet there might surely be a heroism in such affairs; and all commerce become a kind of selling of doves, not impious. The wonder has always been great to me that heroism has never been supposed to be in anywise consistent with the practice of supplying people with food, or clothes; but rather with that of quartering one's self upon them for food, and stripping them of their clothes. Spoiling of armor is a heroic deed in all ages; but the selling of clothes, old or new, has never taken any color of magnanimity. Yet one does not see why feeding the hungry and clothing the naked should ever become base business, even when engaged in on a large scale. If one could contrive to attach the notion of conquest to them anyhow! so that, supposing there were anywhere an obstinate race, who refused to be comforted, one might take some pride in giving them compulsory comfort![1] and as it were, '*occupying* a country' with one's gifts, instead of one's armies? If one could only consider it as much a victory to get a barren field sown, as to get an eared field stripped; and contend who should build villages, instead of who should 'carry' them! Are not all forms of heroism, conceivable in doing these

[1] Quite serious, all this, though it reads like jest.

serviceable deeds? You doubt who is strongest? It might be ascertained by push of spade, as well as push of sword. Who is wisest? There are witty things to be thought of in planning other business than campaigns. Who is bravest? There are always the elements to fight with, stronger than men; and nearly as merciless.

The only absolutely and unapproachably heroic element in the soldier's work seems to be — that he is paid little for it — and regularly: while you traffickers, and exchangers, and others occupied in presumably benevolent business, like to be paid much for it — and by chance. I never can make out how it is that a *knight*-errant does not expect to be paid for his trouble, but a *peddler*-errant always does; — that people are willing to take hard knocks for nothing, but never to sell ribbons cheap; — that they are ready to go on fervent crusades to recover the tomb of a buried God, but never on any travels to fulfil the orders of a living one; — that they will go anywhere barefoot to preach their faith, but must be well bribed to practise it, and are perfectly ready to give the Gospel gratis, but never the loaves and fishes.[1]

If you choose to take the matter up on any such soldierly principle, to do your commerce, and your feeding of nations, for fixed salaries; and to be as particular about giving people the best food, and the best cloth, as soldiers are about giving them the best gunpowder, I could carve something for you on your exchange worth looking at. But I can only at present suggest decorating its frieze with pendent purses; and making its pillars broad at the base, for the sticking of bills. And in the innermost chambers of it there might be a statue of Britannia of the Market, who may have, perhaps advisably, a partridge for her crest, typical at once of her courage in fighting for noble ideas, and of her interest in game; and round its neck the inscription in golden letters, *Perdix fovit quae non peperit.*[2] Then, for her spear, she might have a weaver's beam; and on her shield, instead of St. George's Cross, the Milanese boar, semi-fleeced, with the town of Gennesaret proper, in the field, and the legend 'In the best market,'[3] and her corselet, of leather, folded over her heart in the shape of a purse, with thirty slits in it for a piece of money to go in at, on each day of the month. And I doubt not but that people would come to see your exchange, and its goddess, with applause.

Nevertheless, I want to point out to you certain strange characters in this goddess of yours. She differs from the great Greek and Medieval deities essentially in two things — first, as to the continuance of her presumed power; secondly, as to the extent of it.

Ist, as to the Continuance.

The Greek Goddess of Wisdom gave continual increase of wisdom, as the Christian Spirit of Comfort (or Comforter) continual increase of comfort. There was no question, with these, of any limit or cessation of function. But with your Agora Goddess, that is just the most important question. Getting on — but where to? Gathering together — but how much? Do you mean to gather always — never to spend? If so, I wish you joy of your goddess, for I am just as well off as you, without the trouble of worshipping her at all. But if you do not spend, somebody else will — somebody else must. And it is because of this (among many other such errors) that I have fearlessly declared your so-called science of Political Economy to be no science; because, namely, it has omitted the study of exactly the most important branch of the business — the study of *spending*. For spend you must, and as much as you make, ultimately. You gather corn: — will you bury England under a heap of grain; or will you, when you have gathered, finally eat? You gather gold: — will you make your house-roofs of it, or pave your streets with it? That is still one way of spending it. But if you keep it, that you may get more, I'll give you more; I'll give you all the gold you want — all you can imagine — if you can tell me what you'll do with it. You shall have thousands of

[1] Please think over this paragraph, too briefly and antithetically put, but one of those which I am happiest in having written.

[2] Jerem. xvii. 11 (best in Septuagint and Vulgate). 'As the partridge, fostering what she brought not forth, so he that getteth riches, not by right shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.'

[3] Meaning fully, 'We have brought our pigs to it.'

gold pieces; — thousands of thousands — millions — mountains, of gold: where will you keep them? Will you put an Olympus of silver upon a golden Pelion — make Ossa like a wart? Do you think the rain and dew would then come down to you, in the streams from such mountains, more blessedly than they will down the mountains which God has made for you, of moss and whinstone? But it is not gold that you want to gather! What is it? greenbacks? No; not those neither. What is it then — is it ciphers after a capital I? Cannot you practise writing ciphers, and write as many as you want? Write ciphers for an hour every morning, in a big book, and say every evening, I am worth all those naughts more than I was yesterday. Won't that do? Well, what in the name of Plutus is it you want? Not gold, not greenbacks, not ciphers after a capital I? You will have to answer, after all, 'No; we want, somehow or other, money's *worth*.' Well, what is that? Let your Goddess of Getting-on discover it, and let her learn to stay therein.

II. But there is yet another question to be asked respecting this Goddess of Getting-on. The first was of the continuance of her power; the second is of its extent.

Pallas and the Madonna were supposed to be all the world's Pallas, and all the world's Madonna. They could teach all men, and they could comfort all men. But, look strictly into the nature of the power of your Goddess of Getting-on; and you will find she is the Goddess — not of everybody's getting on — but only of somebody's getting on. This is a vital, or rather deathful, distinction. Examine it in your own ideal of the state of national life which this Goddess is to evoke and maintain. I asked you what it was, when I was last here;[1] — you have never told me. Now, shall I try to tell you?

Your ideal of human life then is, I think, that it should be passed in a pleasant undulating world, with iron and coal everywhere underneath it. On each pleasant bank of this world is to be a beautiful mansion, with two wings; and stables, and coach-houses; a moderately sized park; a large garden and hothouses; and pleasant carriage drives through the shrubberies. In this mansion are to live the favored votaries of the Goddess; the English gentleman, with his gracious wife, and his beautiful family; always able to have the boudoir and the jewels for the wife, and the beautiful ball dresses for the daughters, and hunters for the sons, and a shooting in the Highlands for himself. At the bottom of the bank, is to be the mill; not less than a quarter of a mile long, with a steam engine at each end, and two in the middle, and a chimney three hundred feet high. In this mill are to be in constant employment from eight hundred to a thousand workers, who never drink, never strike, always go to church on Sunday, and always express themselves in respectful language.

Is not that, broadly, and in the main features, the kind of thing you propose to yourselves? It is very pretty indeed, seen from above; not at all so pretty, seen from below. For, observe, while to one family this deity is indeed the Goddess of Getting-on, to a thousand families she is the Goddess of *not* Getting-on. 'Nay,' you say, 'they have all their chance.' Yes, so has every one in a lottery, but there must always be the same number of blanks. 'Ah! but in a lottery it is not skill and intelligence which take the lead, but blind chance.' What then! do you think the old practice, that 'they should take who have the power, and they should keep who can,' is less iniquitous, when the power has become power of brains instead of fist? and that, though we may not take advantage of a child's or a woman's weakness, we may of a man's foolishness? 'Nay, but finally, work must be done, and some one must be at the top, some one at the bottom.' Granted, my friends. Work must always be, and captains of work must always be; and if you in the least remember the tone of any of my writings, you must know that they are thought unfit for this age, because they are always insisting on need of government, and speaking with scorn of liberty. But I beg you to observe that there is a wide difference between being captains or governors of work, and

[1] 'The Two Paths,' p. 115 (small edition), and p. 99 of vol. x of the 'Revised Series of the Entire Works.'

taking the profits of it. It does not follow, because you are general of an army, that you are to take all the treasure, or land, it wins (if it fight for treasure or land); neither, because you are king of a nation, that you are to consume all the profits of the nation's work. Real kings, on the contrary, are known invariably by their doing quite the reverse of this,—by their taking the least possible quantity of the nation's work for themselves. There is no test of real kinghood so infallible as that. Does the crowned creature live simply, bravely, unostentatiously? probably he *is* a King. Does he cover his body with jewels, and his table with delicates? in all probability he is *not* a King. It is possible he may be, as Solomon was; but that is when the nation shares his splendor with him. Solomon made gold, not only to be in his own palace as stones, but to be in Jerusalem as stones. But even so, for the most part, these splendid kinghoods expire in ruin, and only the true kinghoods live, which are of royal laborers governing loyal laborers; who, both leading rough lives, establish the true dynasties. Conclusively you will find that because you are king of a nation, it does not follow that you are to gather for yourself all the wealth of that nation; neither, because you are king of a small part of the nation, and lord over the means of its maintenance — over field, or mill, or mine,— are you to take all the produce of that piece of the foundation of national existence for yourself.

You will tell me I need not preach against these things, for I cannot mend them. No, good friends, I cannot; but you can, and you will; or something else can and will. Even good things have no abiding power — and shall these evil things persist in victorious evil? All history shows, on the contrary, that to be the exact thing they never can do. Change *must* come; but it is ours to determine whether change of growth, or change of death. Shall the Parthenon be in ruins on its rock, and Bolton priory in its meadow, but these mills of yours be the consummation of the buildings of the earth, and their wheels be as the wheels of eternity? Think you that 'men may come, and men may go,' but — mills — go on forever? Not so; out of these, better or worse shall come; and it is for you to choose which.

I know that none of this wrong is done with deliberate purpose. I know, on the contrary, that you wish your workmen well; that you do much for them, and that you desire to do more for them, if you saw your way to such benevolence safely. I know that even all this wrong and misery are brought about by a warped sense of duty, each of you striving to do his best; but unhappily, not knowing for whom this best should be done. And all our hearts have been betrayed by the plausible impiety of the modern economist, that 'To do the best for yourself, is finally to do the best for others.' Friends, our great Master said not so; and most absolutely we shall find this world is not made so. Indeed, to do the best for others, is finally to do the best for ourselves; but it will not do to have our eyes fixed on that issue. The Pagans had got beyond that. Hear what a Pagan says of this matter; hear what were, perhaps, the last written words of Plato,— if not the last actually written (for this we cannot know), yet assuredly in fact and power his parting words — in which, endeavoring to give full crowning and harmonious close to all his thoughts, and to speak the sum of them by the imagined sentence of the Great Spirit, his strength and his heart fail him, and the words cease, broken off forever.

They are at the close of the dialogue called 'Critias,' in which he describes, partly from real tradition, partly in ideal dream, the early state of Athens; and the genesis, and order, and religion, of the fabled isle of Atlantis; in which genesis he conceives the same first perfection and final degeneracy of man, which in our own Scriptural tradition is expressed by saying that the Sons of God intermarried with the daughters of men, for he supposes the earliest race to have been indeed the children of God; and to have corrupted themselves, until 'their spot was not the spot of his children.' And this, he says, was the end; that indeed 'through many generations, so long as the God's nature in them yet was full, they were submissive to the sacred laws, and carried themselves lovingly to all that had kindred with them in divineness; for

their uttermost spirit was faithful and true, and in every wise great; so that in *all meekness of wisdom, they dealt with each other,* and took all things chances of life; and despising all things except virtue, they cared little what happened day by day, and *bore lightly their burden* of gold and of possessions; for they saw that, if *only their common love and virtue increased, all these things would be increased together with them;* but to set their esteem and ardent pursuit upon material possession would be to lose that first, and their virtue and affection together with it. And by such reasoning, and what of the divine nature remained in them, they gained all this greatness of which we have already told; but when the God's part of them faded and became extinct, being mixed again and again, and effaced by the prevalent mortality; and the human nature at last exceeded, they then became unable to endure the courses of fortune; and fell into shapelessness of life, and baseness in the sight of him who could see, having lost everything that was fairest of their honor; while to the blind hearts which could not discern the true life, tending to happiness, it seemed that they were then chiefly noble and happy, being filled with all iniquity of inordinate possession and power. Whereupon, the God of gods, whose Kinghood is in laws, beholding a once just nation thus cast into misery, and desiring to lay such punishment upon them as might make them repent into restraining, gathered together all the gods into his dwelling-place, which from heaven's center overlooks whatever has part in creation; and having assembled them, he said'—

The rest is silence. Last words of the chief wisdom of the heathen, spoken of this idol of riches; this idol of yours; this golden image high by measureless cubits, set up where your green fields of England are furnace-burnt into the likeness of the plain of Dura: this idol, forbidden to us, first of all idols, by our own Master and faith; forbidden to us also by every human lip that has ever, in any age or people, been accounted of as able to speak according to the purposes of God. Continue to make that forbidden deity your principal one, and soon no more art, no more science, no more pleasure will be possible. Catastrophe will come; or worse than catastrophe, slow moldering and withering into Hades. But if you can fix some conception of a true human state of life to be striven for — life good for all men as for yourselves — if you can determine some honest and simple order of existence; following those trodden ways of wisdom, which are pleasantness, and seeking her quiet and withdrawn paths, which are peace;[1] — then, and so sanctifying wealth into 'commonwealth,' all your art, your literature, your daily labors, your domestic affection, and citizen's duty, will join and increase into one magnificent harmony. You will know then how to build, well enough; you will build with stone well, but with flesh better; temples not made with hands, but riveted of hearts; and that kind of marble, crimson-veined, is indeed eternal.

[1] I imagine the Hebrew chant merely intends passionate repetition, and not a distinction of this somewhat fanciful kind; yet we may profitably make it in reading the English.

1937-1961

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809–1892)

Tennyson was born at Somersby Rectory in Lincolnshire. The rich level landscape of the reclaimed fen district is clearly visible in his poems. He soon began to imitate the English masters of verse and the compositions 'written between 15 and 17' in *Poems by Two Brothers* (1827) show his transitory allegiance to Byron and Scott. At Trinity College, Cambridge, he took the Newdigate prize in 1829 with a blank verse poem on *Timbuctoo*, and the next year issued *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*. Numerous collegians, of whom many were afterward eminent in scholarship and affairs, became his sworn admirers and steadily announced that a new poet had arrived. *Poems* (1833) showed a further advance in quality and scope, but this and the preceding volume were ridiculed by the reviews for certain obvious affectations and slips of taste and Tennyson waited nine years before publishing again. During this interval, he set himself with great earnestness to comprehend the thoughts and movements of his time, enriched his mind by constant study of the classics and of English literature, recreated the best of his old poems and composed with great deliberation his new ones. When his two volumes of 1842 appeared, such poems as *The Lady of Shalott* and *The Palace of Art* had been transformed and with them came *Ulysses*, *Morte d'Arthur*, *Locksley Hall* and many others of moderate length, every one exquisitely tempered and wrought. His reputation was immediately secure, and steadily increased during fifty years more of continuous authorship. In 1850 he received the 'laurel greener from the brows of him that uttered nothing base.' *The Princess* had already appeared and *In Memoriam* which had been growing since the death of his friend Arthur Hallam in 1833, now sealed his title not only to the laureateship but to the position of chief spiritual guide to his age. *Maud* (1855) represented something of a departure from his previous methods toward a less restrained style and a more vigorous grasp on the realities of life, a departure which he carried still farther in some of his 'ballads' and in realistic studies such as *The Northern Farmer*. The chief enterprise of his later years, however, was *The Idylls of the King*, at which he wrought from 1856–59, and again in 1868–72, when the poem became substantially complete. For nearly ten years his chief energies were given to the production of his seven dramas; of these *Queen Mary*, *Harold*, and *Becket* were all written by 1879, though the last was not published until several years later. From 1880 until his death in 1892 every few years added another volume of miscellaneous poems. At least in his lyrics, Tennyson's voice remained to the last, 'unchanged to hoarse or mute,' a 'clear call' with only a few dark overtones caught from the perplexities of the new era into which his life extended. In the few years since his death, we have moved fast and far from the platforms of the Victorian age; its problems are not our problems, and still less its solutions. Our interest, then, shifts more and more from Tennyson's 'message,' which was of his time, and attaches to the rich and instructed beauty of his art, which is imperishable.

MARIANA

With blackest moss, the flower-plots
  Were thickly crusted, one and all:
The rusted nails fell from the knots
  That held the pear to the gable-wall.
The broken sheds looked sad and strange:
  Unlifted was the clinking latch;
  Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
    She only said, 'My life is dreary,
      He cometh not, she said;
    She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
      I would that I were dead!'

Her tears fell with the dews at even;
  Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
  Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
  When thickest dark did trance the sky,
  She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats,
    She only said, 'The night is dreary,
      He cometh not,' she said;
    She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
      I would that I were dead!'

Upon the middle of the night,
  Waking she heard the night-fowl crow:

The cock sung out an hour ere light;
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her: without hope of change,
In sleep she seemed to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.
She only said, 'My life is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!'

About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blackened waters slept
And o'er it many, round and small,
The clustered marish-mosses crept.
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarlèd bark:
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.
She only said, 'The night is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!'

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.
She only said, 'My life is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!'

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creaked;
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
Behind the moldering wainscot shrieked,
Or from the crevice peered about,
Old faces glimmered through the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.
She only said, 'My life is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!'

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moated sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
Then, said she, 'I am very dreary,
He will not come,' she said;
She wept: 'I am aweary, aweary,
O God, that I were dead!'

(1830)

SONG

I

A spirit haunts the year's last hours
Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers:
To himself he talks;
For at eventide, listening earnestly,
At his work you may hear him sob and sigh
In the walks;
Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks
Of the moldering flowers:
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

II

The air is damp, and hushed, and close,
As a sick man's room when he taketh repose
An hour before death;
My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves
At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,
And the breath
Of the fading edges of box beneath,
And the year's last rose.
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

(1830)

THE POET

The poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above;
Dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love.

He saw through life and death, through good and ill,
He saw through his own soul.
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,

Before him lay; with echoing feet he threaded
The secretest walks of fame:
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed
And winged with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,
And of so fierce a flight,
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore
Them earthward till they lit;
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,
The fruitful wit

Cleaving took root, and springing forth anew
Where'er they fell, behold,
Like to the mother plant in semblance grew
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnished all abroad to fling
The winged shafts of truth,
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring,
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,
Though one did fling the fire;
Heaven flowed upon the soul in many dreams
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world
Like one great garden showed,
And through the wreaths of floating dark upcurled,
Rare sunrise flowed.

And Freedom reared in that august sunrise
Her beautiful bold brow,
When rites and forms before his burning eyes
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes
Sunned by those orient skies;
But round about the circles of the globes
Of her keen eyes
And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame
WISDOM, a name to shake
All evil dreams of power — a sacred name,
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,
And as the lightning to the thunder
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No sword
Of wrath her right arm whirled,
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word
She shook the world.

(1830)

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

PART I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And through the field the road runs by
To many-towered Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Through the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veiled,
Slide the heavy barges trailed
By slow horses; and unhailed
The shallop flitteth silken-sailed
Skimming down to Camelot;
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,

Down to towered Camelot;
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'T is the fairy
Lady of Shalott.'

PART II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colors gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving through a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot;
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-haired page in crimson clad,
Goes by to towered Camelot;
And sometimes through the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often through the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot;
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
'I am half sick of shadows,' said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling through the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneeled,
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled in the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot;
And from his blazoned baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armor rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jeweled shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burned like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot;
As often through the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed;
On burnished hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flowed
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flashed into the crystal mirror,
'Tirra lirra,' by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces through the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She looked down at Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror cracked from side to side;
'The curse is come upon me,' cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over towered Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seër in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day

She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Through the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot;
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly
And her eyes were darkened wholly
Turned to towered Camelot.
For ere she reached upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight, and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they crossed themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot;
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, 'She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott.'

(1833)

THE PALACE OF ART

I built my soul a lordly pleasure-house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.
I said, 'O Soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well.'

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnished brass,
I chose. The rangèd ramparts bright
From level meadow-bases of deep grass
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf
The rock rose clear, or winding stair,
My soul would live alone unto herself
In her high palace there.

And 'while the world runs round and round,' I said,
'Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his steadfast shade
Sleeps on his luminous ring.'

To which my soul made answer readily:
'Trust me, in bliss I shall abide
In this great mansion, that is built for me.
So royal-rich and wide.'

. . . . . .

Four courts I made, East, West, and South and North,
In each a squarèd lawn, wherefrom
The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth
A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a row
Of cloisters, branched like mighty woods,
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow
Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery
That lent broad verge to distant lands,
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky
Dipped down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one swell
Across the mountain streamed below
In misty folds, that floating as they fell,
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seemed
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up
A cloud of incense of all odor steamed
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, 'And who shall gaze upon
My palace with unblinded eyes,
While this great bow will waver in the sun,
And that sweet incense rise?'

For that sweet incense rose and never failed,
And, while day sank or mounted higher,
The light aerial gallery, golden-railed,
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stained and traced,
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires
From shadowed grots of arches interlaced,
And tipped with frost-like spires.

. . . . . .

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,
Through which the livelong day my soul did pass,
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,
All various, each a perfect whole
From living Nature, fit for every mood
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green and blue,
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
Where with puffed cheek the belted hunter blew
His wreathèd bugle-horn.

One seemed all dark and red — a tract of sand,
And some one pacing there alone,
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,
Lit with a low large moon.

One showed an iron coast and angry waves,
You seemed to hear them climb and fall
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow
By herds upon an endless plain,
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.
In front they bound the sheaves. Behind
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,
And hoary to the wind.

And one a foreground black with stones and slags,
Beyond, a line of heights, and higher
All barred with long white cloud the scornful crags,
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home — gray twilight poured
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep — all things in order stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,
As fit for every mood of mind,
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there,
Not less than truth designed.

. . . . . .

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,
Beneath branch-work of costly sardonyx,
Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-walled city on the sea,
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
Wound with white roses, slept Saint Cecily;
An angel looked at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise
A group of Houris bowed to see
The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son
In some fair space of sloping greens
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
And watched by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,
To list a foot-fall, ere he saw
The wood-nymph, stayed the Ausonian king to hear
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrailed,
And many a tract of palm and rice,
The throne of Indian Cama slowly sailed
A summer fanned with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasped,
From off her shoulder backward borne,
From one hand drooped a crocus; one hand grasped
The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flushed Ganymede, his rosy thigh
Half-buried in the eagle's down,
Sole as a flying star shot through the sky
Above the pillared town.

Nor these alone; but every legend fair
Which the supreme Caucasian mind
Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,
Not less than life, designed.

. . . . . .

Then in the towers I placed great bells that swung,
Moved of themselves, with silver sound;
And with choice paintings of wise men I hung
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,
Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild;
And there the world-worn Dante grasped his song,
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest;
A million wrinkles carved his skin;
A hundred winters snowed upon his breast,
From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set
Many an arch high up did lift,
And angels rising and descending met
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely planned
With cycles of the human tale
Of this wide world, the times of every land
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,
Toiled onward, pricked with goads and stings;
Here played, a tiger, rolling to and fro
The heads and crowns of kings;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or bind
All force in bonds that might endure,
And here once more like some sick man declined,
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod; and those great bells
Began to chime. She took her throne;
She sat betwixt the shining oriels,
To sing her songs alone.

And through the topmost oriels' colored flame
Two godlike faces gazed below;
Plato the wise, and large-browed Verulam,
The first of those who know.

And all those names that in their motion were
Full-welling fountain-heads of change,
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazoned fair
In diverse raiment strange;

Through which the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue,
Flushed in her temples and her eyes,
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, drew
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong
Her low preamble all alone,
More than my soul to hear her echoed song
Throb through the ribbèd stone;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,
Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over Nature, lord of the visible earth,
Lord of the senses five;

Communing with herself: 'All these are mine,
And let the world have peace or wars,
'T is one to me.' She — when young night divine
Crowned dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils —
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,
And pure quintessences of precious oils
In hollowed moons of gems,

To mimic heaven; and clapped her hands and cried,
'I marvel if my still delight
In this great house so royal-rich and wide
Be flattered to the height.

'O all things fair to sate my various eyes!
O shapes and hues that please me well!
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,
My Gods, with whom I dwell!

'O Godlike isolation which art mine,
I can but count thee perfect gain,
What time I watch the darkening droves of swine
That range on yonder plain.

'In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,
They graze and wallow, breed and sleep;
And oft some brainless devil enters in,
And drives them to the deep.'

Then of the moral instinct would she prate
And of the rising from the dead,
As hers by right of full-accomplished Fate;
And at the last she said:

'I take possession of man's mind and deed.
I care not what the sects may brawl,
I sit as God holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all.'

. . . . . .

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth
Flashed through her as she sat alone,
Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prospered; so three years
She prospered; on the fourth she fell,
Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,
Struck through with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
God, before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of Personality,
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she turned her sight,
The airy hand confusion wrought,
Wrote 'Mene, mene,' and divided quite
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude
Fell on her, from which mood was born
Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood
Laughter at her self-scorn.

'What! is not this my place of strength,' she said,
'My spacious mansion built for me,
Whereof the strong foundation-stones were laid
Since my first memory?'

But in dark corners of her palace stood
Uncertain shapes; and unawares
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood,
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,
On corpses three-months-old at noon she came,
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light
Or power of movement, seemed my soul,
Mid onward-sloping motions infinite
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, locked in with bars of sand
Left on the shore, that hears all night
The plunging seas draw backward from the land
Their moon led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance
Joined not, but stood, and standing saw
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance
Rolled round by one fixed law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curled.
'No voice,' she shrieked in that lone hall,
'No voice breaks thro' the stillness of this world:
One deep, deep silence all!'

She, moldering with the dull earth's moldering sod,
Inwrapt tenfold in slothful shame,
Lay there exilèd from eternal God,
Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,
And nothing saw, for her despair,
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,
And ever worse with growing time,
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
And all alone in crime:

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round
With blackness as a solid wall,
Far off she seemed to hear the dully sound
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveler walking slow,
In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moonrise hears the low
Moan of an unknown sea;

And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry
Of great wild beasts; then thinketh, 'I have found
A new land, but I die.'

She howled aloud, 'I am on fire within.
There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die?'

So when four years were wholly finishèd,
She threw her royal robes away.
'Make me a cottage in the vale,' she said,
'Where I may mourn and pray.

'Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are
So lightly, beautifully built:
Perchance I may return with others there,
When I have purged my guilt.'
(1833–1842)

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

I read, before my eyelids dropped their shade,
The Legend of Good Women, long ago
Sung by the morning star of song, who made
His music heard below;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath
Preluded those melodious bursts that fill
The spacious times of great Elizabeth
With sounds that echo still.

And, for a while, the knowledge of his art
Held me above the subject, as strong gales
Hold swollen clouds from raining, though my heart,
Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every land
I saw, wherever light illumineth,
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand
The downward slope to death.

Those far-renownèd brides of ancient song
Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,
And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,
And trumpets blown for wars;

And clattering flints battered with clanging hoofs;
And I saw crowds in columned sanctuaries,
And forms that passed at windows and on roofs
Of marble palaces;

Corpses across the threshold; heroes tall
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall;
Lances in ambush set;

And high shrine-doors burst through with heated blasts
That run before the fluttering tongues of fire;
White surf wind-scattered over sails and masts,
And ever climbing higher;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,
And hushed seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land
Bluster the winds and tides the self-same way,
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,
Torn from the fringe of spray.

I started once, or seemed to start in pain,
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,
As when a great thought strikes along the brain,
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,
That bore a lady from a leaguered town;
And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing thought
Streamed onward, lost their edges, and did creep
Rolled on each other, rounded, smoothed, and brought
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wandered far
In an old wood; fresh-washed in coolest dew
The maiden splendors of the morning star
Shook in the steadfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree boles did stoop and lean
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath
Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest green,
New from its silken sheath.

The dim red Morn had died, her journey done,
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,

Half-fallen across the threshold of the sun,
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,
Not any song of bird or sound of rill;
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine turned
Their humid arms festooning tree to tree,
And at the root through lush green grasses burned
The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew
The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks drenched in dew,
Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,
Poured back into my empty soul and frame
The times when I remember to have been
Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear undertone
Thrilled through mine ears in that unblissful clime,
Pass freely through; the wood is all thine own,
Until the end of time.'

At length I saw a lady within call,
Stiller than chiseled marble, standing there;
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise
Froze my swift speech; she turning on my face
The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,
Spoke slowly in her place.

'I had great beauty; ask thou not my name:
No one can be more wise than destiny.
Many drew swords and died. Where'er I came
I brought calamity.'

'No marvel, sovereign lady: in fair field
Myself for such a face had boldly died,'
I answered free; and turning I appealed
To one that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,
To her full height her stately stature draws;
'My youth,' she said, 'was blasted with a curse:
This woman was the cause.

'I was cut off from hope in that sad place
Which men called Aulis in those iron years;
My father held his hand upon his face;
I, blinded with my tears,

'Still strove to speak: my voice was thick with sighs
As in a dream. Dimly I could descry
The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish eyes,
Waiting to see me die.

'The high masts flickered as they lay afloat;
The crowds, the temples, wavered, and the shore;
The bright death quivered at the victim's throat;
Touched; and I knew no more.'

Whereto the other with a downward brow:
'I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,
Whirled by the wind, had rolled me deep below,
Then when I left my home.'

Her slow full words sank through the silence drear,
As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping sea:
Sudden I heard a voice that cried 'Come here,
That I may look on thee.'

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,
One sitting on a crimson scarf unrolled;
A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes,
Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began:
'I governed men by change, and so I swayed
All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen a man.
Once, like the moon, I made

'The ever-shifting currents of the blood
According to my humor ebb and flow.
I have no men to govern in this wood:
That makes my only woe.

'Nay — yet it chafes me that I could not bend
One will; nor tame and tutor with mine eye
That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Prythee, friend,
Where is Mark Antony?

'The man, my lover, with whom I rode sublime
On Fortune's neck; we sat as God by God;
The Nilus would have risen before his time
And flooded at our nod.

'We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep, and lit
Lamps which out-burned Canopus. O, my life
In Egypt! O, the dalliance and the wit,
The flattery and the strife,

'And the wild kiss, when fresh from war's alarms,
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,
My mailèd Bacchus leaped into my arms,
Contented there to die!

'And there he died: and when I heard my name
Sighed forth with life, I would not brook my fear
Of the other: with a worm I balked his fame.
What else was left? look here!'—

With that she tore her robe apart, and half
The polished argent of her breast to sight
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,
Showing the aspic's bite.—

'I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found
Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,
A name for ever! — lying robed and crowned
Worthy a Roman spouse.'

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range
Struck by all passion, did fall down and glance
From tone to tone, and glided through all change
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for delight
Because with sudden motion from the ground
She raised her piercing orbs, and filled with light
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest darts:
As once they drew into two burning rings
All beams of Love, melting the mighty hearts
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard
A noise of some one coming through the lawn,
And singing clearer than the crested bird
That claps his wings at dawn:

'The torrent brooks of hallowed Israel
From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon,
Sound all night long, in falling through the dell,
Far-heard beneath the moon.

'The balmy moon of blessed Israel
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with beams divine;
All night the splintered crags that wall the dell
With spires of silver shine.'

As one that museth where broad sunshine laves
The lawn by some cathedral, through the door
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charmed and tied
To where he stands, — so stood I, when that flow
Of music left the lips of her that died
To save her father's vow,

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,
A maiden pure; as when she went along
From Mizpah's towered gate with welcome light,
With timbrel and with song.

My words leaped forth: 'Heaven heads the count of crimes
With that wild oath.' She rendered answer high;

'Not so, nor once alone; a thousand times
I would be born and die.

'Single I grew, like some green plant, whose root
Creeps to the garden water-pipes beneath,
Feeding the flower; but ere my flower to fruit
Changed, I was ripe for death.

'My God, my land, my father — these did move
Me from my bliss of life, that Nature gave,
Lowered softly with a threefold cord of love
Down to a silent grave.

'And I went mourning, "No fair Hebrew boy
Shall smile away my maiden blame among
The Hebrew mothers"— emptied of all joy,
Leaving the dance and song.

'Leaving the olive-gardens far below,
Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow
Beneath the battled tower.

'The light white cloud swam over us. Anon
We heard the lion roaring from his den;
We saw the large white stars rise one by one,
Or, from the darkened glen,

'Saw God divide the night with flying flame,
And thunder on the everlasting hills.
I heard him, for he spake, and grief became
A solemn scorn of ills.

'When the next moon was rolled into the sky,
Strength came to me that equaled my desire,
How beautiful a thing it was to die
For God and for my sire!

'It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,
That I subdued me to my father's will;
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,
Sweetens the spirit still.

'Moreover it is written that my race
Hewed Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer
On Arnon unto Minneth.' Here her face
Glowed, as I looked at her.

She locked her lips; she left me where I stood:
'Glory to God,' she sang, and past afar,
Thridding the somber boskage of the wood,
Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,
As one that from a casement leans his head,
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,
And the old year is dead.

'Alas! alas!' a low voice, full of care,
Murmured beside me: 'Turn and look on me;
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,
If what I was I be.

'Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor!
O me, that I should ever see the light!
Those dragon eyes of angered Eleanor
Do hunt me, day and night.'

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust;
To whom the Egyptian: 'O, you tamely died!
You should have clung to Fulvia's waist, and thrust
The dagger through her side.'

With that sharp sound the white dawn's creeping beams,
Stolen to my brain dissolved the mystery
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams
Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broadened on the borders of the dark
Ere I saw her, who clasped in her last trance
Her murdered father's head, or Joan of Arc,
A light of ancient France;

Or her who knew that Love can vanquish Death,
Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,
Sweet as new buds in spring.

No memory labors longer from the deep
Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore
That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep
To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain
Compassed, how eagerly I sought to strike
Into that wondrous track of dreams again!
But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath been blest,
Desiring what is mingled with past years,
In yearnings that can never be expressed
By sighs or groans or tears;

Because all words, though culled with choicest art,
Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart
Faints, faded by its heat.

(1833)

SAINT AGNES' EVE

Deep on the convent-roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon:
My breath to heaven like vapor goes:
May my soul follow soon!
The shadows of the convent-towers
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
That lead me to my Lord:
Make thou my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soiled and dark,
To yonder shining ground;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before thee;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,
Through all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;
The flashes come and go;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strows her lights below,
And deepens on and up! the gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The Sabbaths of Eternity,
One Sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea—
The Bridegroom with his bride!

(1837)

YOU ASK ME, WHY, THOUGH ILL AT EASE

You ask me why, though ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land, where girt with friends or foes
A man may speak the thing he will;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent:

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But, by degrees to fullness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute,

Though power should make from land to land
The name of Britain trebly great—
Though every channel of the State
Should fill and choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbor-mouth,
Wild wind! I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.

(1842)

OF OLD SAT FREEDOM ON THE HEIGHTS

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her feet:
Above her shook the starry lights:
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,
Self-gathered in her prophet-mind,
But fragments of her mighty voice
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stepped she down through town and field
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men revealed
The fulness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, Godlike, grasps the triple forks,
And, king-like, wears the crown:

Her open eyes desire the truth.
The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears;

That her fair form may stand and shine,
Make bright our days and light our dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes!

(1842)

SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splintered spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel:
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favors fall!
For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall:
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bowed in crypt and shrine:
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and thrill;
So keep I fair through faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns:
Then by some secret shrine I ride;
I hear a voice but none are there;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.

Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
And solemn chants resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
I find a magic bark;
I leap on board: no helmsman steers:
I float till all is dark:
A gentle sound, an awful light!
Three angels bear the holy Grail:
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
Through dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
And, ringing, springs from brand and mail;
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height;
No branchy thicket shelter yields;
But blessèd forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odors haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armor that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touched, are turned to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And through the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
Swells up, and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
'O just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on! the prize is near.'
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-armed I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the holy Grail.

(1842)

A FAREWELL

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver:
No more by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,
A rivulet, then a river:
Nowhere by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder-tree,
And here thine aspen shiver;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

(1842)

MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle rolled
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonnesse about their lord,
King Arthur; then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
'The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep — the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Though Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more — but let what will be be,
I am so deeply smitten through the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride; for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword — and how I rowed across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king;
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known;
But now delay not; take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere;
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.'
To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten through the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.'
So saying, from the ruined shrine he stept
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zigzag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.
There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt;
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth work
Of subtlest jewelery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw; but at the last it seemed
Better to leave Excalibur concealed
There in the many-knotted water-flags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded king.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
'Hast thou performed my mission which I gave?

What is it thou hast seen, or what hast heard?'
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
'I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag.'
To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
'Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseemed
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight;
For surer sign had followed, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.'
Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fixed in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud:
'And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost forever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The king is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt? but were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the lake;
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills."
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence;
But now much honor and much fame were lost.'
So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded king.
Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
'What is it thou hast seen, or what hast heard?'
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
'I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'
To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widowed of the power in his eye
That bowed the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence;
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'
Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutched the sword,
And strongly wheeled and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirled in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flashed and fell the brand Excalibur;
But ere he dipped the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the king.
Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out; what is it thou hast heard, or seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not though I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I looked again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'
And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
'My end draws nigh; 't is time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'
So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded through his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him through the place of tombs.
But, as he walked, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sighed the king,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, 'Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walked,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clanged round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armèd heels —
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.
Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream — by these
Three queens with crowns of gold — and from them rose
A cry that shivered to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.
Then murmured Arthur, 'Place me in the barge,'
And to the barge they came. There those three queens
Put forth their hands, and took the king, and wept.
But she that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shattered casque, and chafed his hands,
And called him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood; for all his face was white
And colorless, and like the withered moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dashed with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls —
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the dais-throne — were parched with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mixed with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shattered column lay the king;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot through the lists at Camelot, and charged

Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.
Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds.'
And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
'The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May he within himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seëst — if indeed I go —
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'
So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Looked one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

(1842)

ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Matched with an agèd wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel; I will drink
Life to the lees. All times I have enjoyed
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea. I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known,— cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honored of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untraveled world whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!
As though to breathe were life! Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains; but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,

A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the scepter and the isle—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and through soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centered in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toiled and wrought, and thought with me—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honor and his toil.
Death closes all; but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'T is not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Though much is taken, much abides; and though
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

(1842)

LOCKSLEY HALL

Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet 't is early morn:
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-horn.

'T is the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising through the mellow shade,
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wandered, nourishing a youth sublime
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of Time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed;
When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed:

When I dipped into the future far as human eye could see;
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.—

In the Spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast;
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest;

In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnished dove;
In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one so young,
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance hung.

And I said, 'My cousin Amy, speak, and speak the truth to me,

Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee.'

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a color and a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turned — her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of sighs —
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes —

Saying, 'I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me wrong';
Saying, 'Dost thou love me, cousin?' weeping, 'I have loved thee long.'

Love took up the glass of time, and turned it in his glowing hands;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copses ring,
And her whisper thronged my pulses with the fulness of the Spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,
And our spirits rushed together at the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my Amy, mine no more!
O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren, barren shore!

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs have sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy? having known me — to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine!

Yet it shall be; thou shalt lower to his level day by day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathize with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is; thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy; think not they are glazed with wine.
Go to him, it is thy duty; kiss him, take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought;
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand —
Better thou wert dead before me, though I slew thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the hearts' disgrace,
Rolled in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

Cursèd be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth!
Cursèd be the social lies that warp us from the living truth!

Cursèd be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule!
Cursèd be the gold that gilds the straitened forehead of the fool!

Well — 't is well that I should bluster! — hadst thou less unworthy proved —
Would to God — for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit?
I will pluck it from my bosom, though my heart be at the root.

Never, though my mortal summers to such length of years should come
As the many-wintered crow that leads the clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the mind?
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her, kind?

I remember one that perished; sweetly did she speak and move;
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore?
No — she never loved me truly; love is love for evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorned of devils! this is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,
To thy widowed marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,' whispered by the phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking ancient kindness on thy pain.
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow; get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace; for a tender voice will cry,
'T is a purer life than thine, a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down; my latest rival brings thee rest.
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast.

O, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not his due.
Half is thine and half is his; it will be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart.

'They were dangerous guides, the feelings — she herself was not exempt —
Truly, she herself had suffered'— Perish in thy self-contempt!

Overlive it — lower yet — be happy! wherefore should I care?
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like these?
Every door is barred with gold, and opens but to golden keys.

Every gate is thronged with suitors, all the markets overflow.
I have but an angry fancy; what is that which I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground,
When the ranks are rolled in vapor, and the winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honor feels,
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier page.
Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield,
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men;

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new;
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do.

For I dipped into the future, far as human eye could see.
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilot of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rained a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging through the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were furled
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapped in universal law.

So I triumphed ere my passion sweeping through me left me dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out of joint;
Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping on from point to point;

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion, creeping nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful joys,
Though the deep heart of existence beat for ever like a boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the bugle-horn,
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their scorn:

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moldered string?
I am shamed through all my nature to have loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's pleasure, woman's pain—
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain:

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, matched with mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine—

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat,

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-starred;—
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit—there to wander far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossomed bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree—
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions cramped no longer shall have scope and breathing space;
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinewed, they shall dive, and they shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I *know* my words are wild,
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower pains!

Mated with a squalid savage—what to me were sun or clime!
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time—

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in Ajalon!

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range,
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.

Through the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day;
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age,—for mine I knew not,—help me as when life begun;
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well through all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall!

Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapor from the margin, blackening over heath and holt,
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go.

(1842)

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

(1842)

THE POET'S SONG

The rain had fallen, the Poet arose,
He passed by the town and out of the street,
A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,
And waves of shadow went over the wheat,
And he sat him down in a lonely place,
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopped as he hunted the fly,
The snake slipped under a spray,
The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,
And stared, with his foot on the prey.

And the nightingale thought, 'I have sung many songs,
But never a one so gay,
For he sings of what the world will be
When the years have died away.'

(1842)

SONGS

From THE PRINCESS

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awakened birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remembered kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feigned
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more!

(1847)

The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O, hark, O, hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O, sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying;
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river;
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

(1850)

Thy voice is heard through rolling drums
That beat to battle where he stands;
Thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands:
A moment, while the trumpets blow,
He sees his brood about thy knee;
The next, like fire he meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

(1850)

Home they brought her warrior dead;
She nor swooned nor uttered cry:
All her maidens, watching, said,
'She must weep or she will die.'

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Called him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stepped,
Took the face-cloth from the face;
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee—
Like summer tempest came her tears—
'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

(1850)

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape,
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;

But O too fond, when have I answered thee?
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are sealed;
I strove against the stream and all in vain;
Let the great river take me to the main.
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
Ask me no more.

(1850)

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust;
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not fear:
But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light

Forgive what seemed my sin in me;
What seemed my worth since I began;
For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
O sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy lying lip?

'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly run;
A web is woven across the sky,
From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun;

'And all the phantom, Nature, stands—
With all the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of my own,—
A hollow form with empty hands.'

And shall I take a thing so blind,
Embrace her as my natural good;
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind?

XIX

The Danube to the Severn gave
The darkened heart that beat no more;
They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hushed nor moved along,
And hushed my deepest grief of all,

When filled with tears that cannot fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls;
My deeper anguish also falls,
And I can speak a little then.

XXVII

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods;

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfettered by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'T is better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

LV

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs,
That slope through darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

LXIV

Dost thou look back on what hath been,
As some divinely gifted man,
Whose life in low estate began
And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known
And lives to clutch the golden keys,
To mold a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,
Becomes in Fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope,
The center of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
When all his active powers are still,
A distant dearness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
While yet beside its vocal springs
He played at counselors and kings
With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea
And reaps the labor of his hands,
Or in the furrow musing stands:
'Does my old friend remember me?'

LXVII

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
I know that in thy place of rest
By that broad water of the west
There comes a glory on the walls;

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame,
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away;
From off my bed the moonlight dies;
And closing eaves of wearied eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipped in gray:

And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church like a ghost
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

LXXXVIII

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,
Rings Eden through the budded quicks
O, tell me where the senses mix,
O, tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate: fierce extremes employ
  Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
  And in the midmost heart of grief
Thy passion clasps a secret joy;

And I — my harp would prelude woe —
  I cannot all command the strings,
  The glory of the sum of things
Will flash along the chords and go.

CXXIII

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
  O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
  There where the long street roars, hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
  From form to form, and nothing stands;
  They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
  And dream my dream, and hold it true;
  For though my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXX

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
  I hear thee where the waters run;
  Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;
  But though I seem in star and flower,
  To feel thee some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love thee less.

My love involves the love before;
  My love is vaster passion now;
  Though mixed with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
  I have thee still, and I rejoice;
  I prosper, circled with thy voice;
I shall not lose thee though I die.

CXXXI

O living will that shalt endure
  When all that seems shall suffer shock,
  Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow through our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
  A voice as unto him that hears,

  A cry above the conquered years
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
  The truths that never can be proved
  Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

(1850)

* * *

MAUD; A MONODRAMA

PART I

I

I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red heath,
The red-ribbed ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,
And Echo there, whatever is asked her, answers 'Death.'

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,
His who had given me life — O father! O God! was it well? —
Mangled and flattened, and crushed, and dinted into the ground:
There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell.

Did he fling himself down? who knows? for a vast speculation had failed,
And ever he muttered and maddened, and ever wanned with despair,
And out he walked, when the wind like a broken worldling wailed,
And the flying gold of the ruined woodlands drove through the air.

I remember the time, for the roots of my hair were stirred
By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trailed, by a whispered fright,
And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my heart as I heard
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the shuddering night.

Villainy somewhere! whose? One says, we are villains all.
Not he: his honest fame should at least by me be maintained.
But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,

Dropped off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drained.

Why do they prate of the blessings of Peace? we have made them a curse,
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own;
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearthstone?

But these are the days of advance, the works of the men of mind,
When who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's ware or his word?
Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and that of a kind
The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the sword.

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print
Of the golden age — why not, I have neither hope nor trust;
May make my heart as a millstone, set my face as a flint,
Cheat and be cheated, and die; who knows? we are ashes and dust.

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days gone by,
When the poor are hoveled, and hustled together, each sex, like swine,
When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie;
Peace in her vineyard — yes! — but a company forges the wine.

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's head,
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,
And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,
And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life,

And Sleep must lie down armed, for the villainous center-bits
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights,
While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits
To pestle a poisoned poison behind his crimson lights.

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee,
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land and by sea,
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones.

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker out of the foam,
That the smooth-faced snubnosed rogue would leap from his counter and till,
And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yardwand, home.—

What! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood?
Must *I* too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die
Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore to brood
On a horror of shattered limbs and a wretched swindler's lie?

Would there be sorrow for *me?* there was *love* in the passionate shriek,
Love for the silent thing that had made false haste to the grave —
Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought he would rise and speak
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah, God, as he used to rave.

I am sick of the Hall, and the hill, I am sick of the moor and the main.
Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever come to me here?
O, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of pain,
Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?

Workmen up at the Hall! — they are coming back from abroad;
The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a millionaire;
I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular beauty of Maud;
I played with the girl when a child; she promised then to be fair.

Maud with her venturous climbings, and tumbles and childish escapes,
Maud the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the Hall,

Maud with her sweet purse-mouth when my father dangled the grapes,
Maud the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced darling of all,—

What is she now? My dreams are bad. She may bring me a curse,
No, there is fatter game on the moor; she will let me alone.
Thanks, for the fiend best knows whether woman or man be the worse.
I will bury myself in myself, and the Devil may pipe to his own.

III

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly meek,
Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was drowned,
Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on the cheek,
Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom profound;
Woman-like, taking revenge too deep for a transient wrong
Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as pale as before
Growing and fading and growing upon me without a sound,
Luminous, gem-like, ghost-like, death-like, half the night long
Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it no more,
But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden ground,
Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar,
Now to the scream of a maddened beach dragged down by the wave,
Walked in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and found
The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave.

V

A voice by the cedar tree
In the meadow under the Hall!
She is singing an air that is known to me,
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,
A martial song like a trumpet's call!
Singing alone in the morning of life,
In the happy morning of life and of May,
Singing of men that in battle array,
It is ly in heart and ready in hand,
And ch with banner and bugle and fife,
Dear the death, for their native land.

Maud with her exquisite face,
And wild voice pealing up to the sunny sky,
And feet like sunny gems on an English green,
Maud in the light of her youth and her grace,
Singing of Death, and of Honor that cannot die,
Till I well could weep for a time so sordid and mean,
And myself so languid and base.

Silence, beautiful voice!
Be still, for you only trouble the mind
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,
A glory I shall not find.
Still! I will hear you no more.
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice
But to move to the meadow and fall before
Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,
Not her, not her, but a voice.

XI

O, let the solid ground
Not fail beneath my feet
Before my life has found
What some have found so sweet;
Then let come what come may,
What matter if I go mad,
I shall have had my day.

Let the sweet heavens endure,
Not close and darken above me
Before I am quite quite sure
That there is one to love me;
Then let come what come may
To a life that has been so sad,
I shall have had my day.

XII

Birds in the high Hall-garden,
When twilight was falling,
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
They were crying and calling.

Where was Maud? in our wood;
And I — who else? — was with her,
Gathering woodland lilies,
Myriads blow together.

Birds in our wood sang
Ringing through the valleys,
Maud is here, here, here
In among the lilies.

I kissed her slender hand,
She took the kiss sedately;
Maud is not seventeen,
But she is tall and stately.

I to cry out on pride
Who have won her favor!
O, Maud were sure of heaven
If lowliness could save her!

I know the way she went
Home with her maiden posy,
For her feet have touched the meadows
And left the daisies rosy.

Birds in the high Hall-garden
Were crying and calling to her,
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud?
One is come to woo her.

Look, a horse at the door,
And little King Charley snarling!
Go back, my lord, across the moor,
You are not her darling.

XVII

Go not, happy day,
From the shining fields,
Go, not, happy day,
Till the maiden yields.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth.
When the happy Yes
Falters from her lips,
Pass and blush the news
Over glowing ships;
Over blowing seas,
Over seas at rest,
Pass the happy news,
Blush it through the West;
Till the red man dance
By his red cedar-tree,
And the red man's babe
Leap, beyond the sea.
Blush from West to East,
Blush from East to West,
Till the West is East,
Blush it through the West.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth.

XVIII

I have led her home, my love, my only friend.
There is none like her, none.
And never yet so warmly ran my blood
And sweetly, on and on
Calming itself to the long-wished-for end,
Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

None like her, none.
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk
Seemed her light foot along the garden walk,
And shook my heart to think she comes once more;
But even then I heard her close the door;
The gates of heaven are closed, and she is gone.

There is none like her, none,
Nor will be when our summers have deceased.
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious East,
Sighing for Lebanon,
Dark cedar, though thy limbs have here increased,
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
And looking to the South and fed
With honeyed rain and delicate air,
And haunted by the starry head
Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,
And made my life a perfumed altar-flame,
And over whom thy darkness, must have spread
With such delight as theirs of old, thy great
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there
Shadowing the snow-limbed Eve from whom she came?

Here will I lie, while these long branches sway,
And you fair stars that crown a happy day
Go in and out as if at merry play,
Who am no more so all forlorn
As when it seemed far better to be born
To labor and the mattock-hardened hand
Than nursed at ease and brought to understand
A sad astrology, the boundless plan
That makes you tyrants in your iron sky
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand

His nothingness into man.
But now shine on, and what care I
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,
And do accept my madness, and would die
To save from some slight shame one simple girl?—

Would die, for sullen-seeming Death may give
More life to Love than is or ever was
In our low world, where yet 't is sweet to live.
Let no one ask me how it came to pass;
It seems that I am happy, that to me
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

Not die, but live a life of truest breath,
And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs,
O, why should Love, like men in drinking songs,
Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death?
Make answer, Maud my bliss,
Maud made my Maud by that long loving kiss,
Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this?
'The dusky strand of Death inwoven here
With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself more dear.'

Is that enchanted moan only the swell
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay?
And hark the clock within, the silver knell
Of twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white,
And died to live, long as my pulses play;
But now by this my love has closed her sight,
And given false death her hand, and stolen away
To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell
Among the fragments of the golden day.
May nothing there her maiden grace affright!
Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.
My bride to be, my evermore delight,
My own heart's heart, my ownest own, farewell;
It is but for a little space I go,
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell
Beat to the noiseless music of the night!
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow
Of your soft splendors that you look so bright?
I have climbed nearer out of lonely Hell.
Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,
Beat with my heart more blest than heart can tell,
Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe,
That seems to draw — but it shall not be so:
Let all be well, be well.

XXI

Rivulet crossing my ground,
And bringing me down from the Hall
This garden-rose that I found,
Forgetful of Maud and me,
And lost in trouble and moving round
Here at the head of a tinkling fall,
And trying to pass to the sea;
O rivulet, born at the Hall,
My Maud has sent it by thee—
If I read her sweet will right—
On a blushing mission to me,
Saying in odor and color, 'Ah, be
Among the roses to-night.'

XXII

Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
And the musk of the rose is blown

For a breeze of morning moves,
And the planet of love is on high,
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
On a bed of daffodil sky,
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
To faint in his light, and to die.

All night have the roses heard
The flute, violin, bassoon;
All night has the casement jessamine stirred
To the dancers dancing in tune;
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
And a hush with the setting moon.

I said to the lily, 'There is but one,
With whom she has heart to be gay.
When will the dancers leave her alone?
She is weary of dance and play.'
Now half to the setting moon are gone,
And half to the rising day;

Low on the sand and loud on the stone
The last wheel echoes away.

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes
In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
For one that will never be thine?
But mine, but mine,' so I sware to the rose,
'Forever and ever, mine.'

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,
As the music clashed in the Hall;
And long by the garden lake I stood,
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,
Our wood, that is dearer than all;

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet
That whenever a March-wind sighs
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we meet
And the valleys of Paradise.

The slender acacia would not shake
One long milk-bloom on the tree;
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
Knowing your promise to me;
The lilies and roses were all awake,
They sighed for the dawn and thee.

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
Come hither, the dances are done,
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
Queen lily and rose in one;
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
To the flowers, and be their sun.

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate,
She is coming, my dove, my dear;
She is coming, my life, my fate.
The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is near;'
And the white rose weeps, 'She is late;'
The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I hear;'
And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed;
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead;
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red.

PART II

II

See what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairly well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design!

What is it? a learned man
Could give it a clumsy name,
Let him name it who can,
The beauty would be the same.

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will
That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow frill?
Did he push, when he was uncurled,
A golden foot or a fairy horn
Through his dim water-world?

Slight, to be crushed with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand,
Small, but a work divine,
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock
Of cataract seas that snap
The three-decker's oaken spine
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand!

Breton, not Briton; here
Like a shipwrecked man on a coast
Of ancient fable and fear —
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost
That never came from on high
Nor ever arose from below,
But only moves with the moving eye,
Flying along the land and the main —

Why should it look like Maud?
Am I to be overawed
By what I cannot but know
Is a juggle born of the brain?

Back from the Breton, coast,
Sick of a nameless fear,
Back to the dark sea-line
Looking, thinking of all I have lost;
An old song vexes my ear;
But that of Lamech is mine.

For years, a measureless ill,
For years, for ever, to part —
But she, she would love me still;
And as long, O God, as she
Have a grain of love for me,
So long, no doubt, no doubt,
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,
However weary, a spark of will
Not to be trampled out.

Strange, that the mind, when fraught
With a passion so intense
One would think that it well
Might drown all life in the eye,—
That it should, by being so overwrought,
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense
For a shell, or a flower, little things
Which else would have been past by!
And now I remember, I,
When he lay dying there,
I noticed one of his many rings
(For he had many, poor worm) and thought
It is his mother's hair.

Who knows if he be dead?
Whether I need have fled
Am I guilty of blood?
However this may be,
Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,
While I am over the sea!
Let me and my passionate love go by,
But speak to her all things holy and high,
Whatever happen to me!
Me and my harmful love go by;
But come to her waking, find her asleep,
Powers of the height, Powers of the deep,
And comfort her though I die.

III

Courage, poor heart of stone,
I will not ask thee why
Thou canst not understand
That thou art left for ever alone:
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone.—
Or, if I ask thee why,
Care not thou to reply;
She is but dead, and the time is at hand
When thou shalt more than die.

IV

O that 't were possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again!
When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places
By the home that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces
Mixed with kisses sweeter, sweeter
Than anything on earth.

A shadow flits before me,
Not thou, but like to thee,
Ah Christ, that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might tell us
What and where they be!

It leads me forth at evening,
It lightly winds and steals
In a cold white robe before me,
When all my spirit reels
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
And the roaring of the wheels.

Half the night I waste in sighs,
Half in dreams I sorrow after
The delight of early skies;
In a wakeful doze I sorrow
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,
For the meeting of the morrow,
The delight of happy laughter,
The delight of low replies.

'T is a morning pure and sweet,
And a dewy splendor falls
On the little flower that clings
To the turrets and the walls;
'T is a morning pure and sweet,
And the light and shadow fleet;
She is walking in the meadow,
And the woodland echo rings;
In a moment we shall meet;
She is singing in the meadow,
And the rivulet at her feet
Ripples on in light and shadow
To the ballad that she sings.

Do I hear her sing as of old,
My bird with the shining head,
My own dove with the tender eye?
But there rings on a sudden, a passionate cry,
There is some one dying or dead,
And a sullen thunder is rolled;
For a tumult shakes the city,
And I wake, my dream is fled;
In the shuddering dawn, behold,
Without knowledge, without pity,
By the curtains of my bed

That abiding phantom cold!
Get thee hence, nor come again,
Mix not memory with doubt,
Pass, thou death-like type of pain,
Pass and cease to move about!
'T is the blot upon the brain
That *will* show itself without.

Then I rise, the eave-drops fall,
And the yellow vapors choke
The great city sounding wide;
The day comes, a dull red ball
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke
On the misty river-tide.

Through the hubbub of the market
I steal, a wasted frame;
It crosses here, it crosses there,
Through all that crowd confused and loud,
The shadow still the same;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

Alas, for her that met me,
That heard me softly call,
Came glimmering through the laurels
At the quiet evenfall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old manorial hall!

Would the happy spirit descend
From the realms of light and song,
In the chamber or the street,
As she looks among the blest,
Should I fear to greet my friend
Or to say 'Forgive the wrong,'
Or to ask her, 'Take me, sweet,
To the regions of thy rest'?

But the broad light glares and beats,
And the shadow flits and fleets
And will not let me be;
And I loathe the squares and streets,
And the faces that one meets,
Hearts with no love for me.
Always I long to creep
Into some still cavern deep,
There to weep, and weep, and weep
My whole soul out to thee.

(1855)

SONG: From GUINEVERE

'Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'No light had we; for that we do repent;
And learning this, the bridegroom will relent.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'No light! so late! and dark and chill the night!
O, let us in, that we may find the light!
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?
O, let us in, though late, to kiss his feet!
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now.'

(1859)

TITHONUS

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapors weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes; I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-haired shadow roaming like a dream
The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.
Alas! for this gray shadow, once a man —
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seemed
To his great heart none other than a God!
I asked thee, 'Give me immortality.'
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.
But thy strong Hours indignant worked their wills,
And beat me down and marred and wasted me,
And though they could not end me, left me maimed
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, though even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears
To hear me? Let me go; take back thy gift;

Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?
A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart renewed.
Thy cheek begins to redden through the gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,
And shake the darkness from their loosened manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.
Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.
Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?
'The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts.'
Ay me! ay me! with what another heart
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch — if I be he that watched —
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood
Glow with the glow that slowly crimsoned all
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kissed
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.
Yet hold me not for ever in thine East:
How can my nature longer mix with thine?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
Of happy men that have the power to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground;
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave;
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

(1860)

MILTON

(ALCAICS)

O mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies,
O skilled to sing of Time or Eternity,
God-gifted organ-voice of England,
Milton, a name to resound for ages:
Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
Starred from Jehovah's gorgeous armories,
Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean
Rings to the roar of an angel onset!
Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,
And bloom profuse and cedar arches
Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,
Where some refulgent sunset of India
Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,
And crimson-hued the stately palm-woods
Whisper in odorous heights of even.

(1863)

NORTHERN FARMER

OLD STYLE

Wheer 'asta bean saw long and mea liggin'
'ere aloan?
Noorse? thoort nowt o' a noorse; whoy,
Doctor 's abean an' agoan;
Says that I moant 'a naw moor aale, but I
beant a fool;
Git ma my aale, fur I beant a-gawin' to break
my rule.

Doctors, they knaws nowt, fur a says what 's
nawways true;
Naw soort o' koind o' use to saay the things
that a do.
I 've 'ed my point o' aale ivry noight sin' I
bean 'ere.
An' I 've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight
for foorty year

Parson 's a bean loikewoise, an' a sittin' ere
o' my bed.
'The Amoighty 's a taakin o' you to 'issén,
my friend,' a said,

An' a towd ma my sins, an' 's toithe were due, an' I gied it in hond;
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy the lond.

Larn'd a ma' bea. I reckons I 'annot sa mooch to larn.
But a cast oop, thot a did, 'bout Bessy Marris's barne.
Thaw a knaws I hallus voated wi' Squoire an' choorch an' staate,
An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin the raate.

An' I hallus coom'd to 's choorch afoor moy Sally wur dead,
An' 'eard 'um a bummin' awaay loike a buzzard-clock ower my 'ead,
An' I niver knaw'd whot a mean'd but I thowt a 'ad summut to saay,
An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said, an' I coom'd awaay.

Bessy Marris's barne! tha knaws she laaid it to mea.
Mowt a bean, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, shea.
'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass, tha mun understond;
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy the lond.

But Parson a cooms an' a goas, an' a says it easy an' frea:
'The Amoighty 's a taakin o' you to 'issén, my friend,' says 'ea.
I weant saay men be loiars, thaw summun said it in 'aaste;
But 'e reads wonn sarmin a weak, an' I 'a stubb'd Thurnaby waaste.

D' ya moind the waaste, my lass? naw, naw, tha was not born then;
Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eard 'um mysén;
Moast loike a butter-bump, fur I 'eard 'um about an' about,
But I stubb'd 'um oop wi' the lot, an' raäved an' rembled 'um out.

Keaper's it wur; fo' they fun 'um theer a-laaid of 'is faace
Down i' the woild 'enemies afoor I coom'd to the plaace.
Noaks or Thimbleby — toaner 'ed shot 'um as dead as a naail.
Noaks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize — but git ma my aale.

Dubbut looök at the waaste; theer warn't not feead for a cow;
Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' loook at it now —
Warn't worth nowt a haacre, an' now theer 's lots o' feead,
Fourscoor yows upon it, an' some on it down i' seead.

Nobbut a bit on it 's left, an' I mean'd to 'a stubb'd it at fall,
Done it ta-year I mean'd, an' runn'd plow thruff it an' all,
If Godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let ma aloan,—
Mea, wi' haate hoonderd haacre o' Squoire's, an lond o' my oan.

Do Godamoighty knaw what a's doing a-taakin' o' mea?
I beant wonn as saws 'ere a bean an yonder a pea;
An' Squoire 'ull be sa mad an' all — a' dear, a' dear!
And I 'a managed for Squoire coom Michaelmas thutty year.

A mowt 'a taaen owd Joanes, as 'ant not a 'aapoth o' sense,
Or a mowt a' taaen young Robins — a niver mended a fence;
But Godamoighty a moost taake mea an' taake ma now,
Wi' aaf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby hoalms to plow!

Looök 'ow quoloty smoiles when they seeas ma a passin' boy,
Says to thessén, naw doubt, 'What a man a bea sewerloy!'
Fur they knaws what I bean to Squoire sin' fust a coom'd to the 'All;
I done moy duty by Squoire an' I done moy duty boy hall.

Squoire 's i' Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,
For whoa 's to howd the lond ater mea thot muddles ma quoit;
Sartin-sewer I bea thot a weant niver give it to Joanes,
Naw, nor a moant to Robins — a niver rembles the stoans.

But summun 'ull come ater mea mayhap wi' 'is kittle o' steam
Huzzin' an' maazin' the blessed fealds wi' the divil's oan team.

Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they says is sweet,
But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn abear to see it.

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn bring ma the aale?
Doctor 's a 'toattler, lass, an a's hallus i' the owd taale;
I weant break rules fur Doctor, a knaws naw moor nor a floy;
Git ma my aale, I tell tha, an' if I mun doy I mun doy.

(1864)

THE REVENGE

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET

I

At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnace, like a fluttered bird, came flying from far away;
'Spanish ships of war at sea! we have sighted fifty-three!'
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard: ''Fore God I am no coward;
But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of gear,
And the half my men are sick. I must fly but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line; can we fight with fifty-three?'

II

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: 'I know you are no coward;
You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.
But I 've ninety men and more that are lying sick ashore.
I should count myself the coward if I left them, my Lord Howard,
To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of Spain.'

III

So Lord Howard passed away with five ships of war that day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer heaven;
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down below:
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blest him in their pain, that they were not left to Spain,
To the thumb-screw and the stake, for the glory of the Lord.

IV

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and to fight
And he sailed away from Flores till the Spaniard came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather bow.
'Shall we fight or shall we fly?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die!
There 'll be little of us left by the time this sun be set.'
And Sir Richard said again: 'We be all good English men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of the devil,
For I never turned my back upon Don or devil yet.'

V

Sir Richard spoke and he laughed, and we roared a hurrah, and so
The little Revenge ran on sheer into the heart of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her ninety sick below;
For half of their fleet to the right and half to the left were seen,
And the little Revenge ran on through the long sea-lane between.

VI

Thousands of their soldiers looked down from their decks and laughed,
Thousands of their seamen made mock at the mad little craft
Running on and on, till delayed
By their mountain-like San Philip that, of fifteen hundred tons,
And up-shadowing high above us with her yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we stayed.

VII

And while now the great San Philip hung above us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud,

Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two upon the starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

VIII

But anon the great San Philip, she bethought herself and went,
Having that within her womb that had left her ill content;
And the rest they came aboard us, and they fought us hand to hand,
For a dozen times they came with their pikes and musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog that shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the land.

IX

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far over the summer sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and the fifty-three.
Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-thunder and flame;
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with her dead and her shame.
For some were sunk and many were shattered, and so could fight us no more—
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the world before?

X

For he said, 'Fight on! fight on!'
Though his vessel was all but a wreck;
And it chanced that, when half of the short summer night was gone,
With a grisly wound to be drest he had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly dead,
And himself he was wounded again in the side and the head,
And he said, 'Fight on! fight on!'

XI

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out far over the summer sea,
And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay round us all in a ring;
But they dared not touch us again, for they feared that we still could sting,
So they watched what the end would be.
And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we,
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,
And half of the rest of us maimed for life
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate strife;
And the sick men down in the hold were most of them stark and cold,
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the powder was all of it spent;
And the masts and the rigging were lying over the side;
But Sir Richard cried in his English pride:
'We have fought such a fight for a day and a night
As may never be fought again!
We have won great glory, my men!
And a day less or more
At sea or ashore,
We die—does it matter when?
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—sink her, split her in twain!
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of Spain!'

XII

And the gunner said, 'Ay, ay,' but the seamen made reply:
'We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives.
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to let us go;
We shall live to fight again and to strike another blow.'
And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to the foe.

XIII

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with their courtly foreign grace;
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried:
'I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant man and true;
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do.
With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard Grenville die!'
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

XIV

And they stared at the dead that had been so valiant and true,
And had holden the power and glory of Spain so cheap

That he dared her with one little ship and his English few;
Was he devil or man? He was devil for aught they knew,
But they sank his body with honor down into the deep,
And they manned the Revenge with a swarthier alien crew,
And away she sailed with her loss and longed for her own;
When a wind from the lands they had ruined awoke from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the weather to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an earthquake grew,
Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and their masts and their flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell on the shot-shattered navy of Spain,
And the little Revenge herself went down by the island crags
To be lost evermore in the main.

(1878)

TO VIRGIL

Roman Virgil, thou that singest Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,
Ilion falling, Rome arising, wars, and filial faith, and Dido's pyre;

Landscape-lover, lord of language more than he that sang the 'Works and Days,'
All the chosen coin of fancy flashing out from many a golden phrase;

Thou that singest wheat and woodland, tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and herd;
All the charm of all the Muses often flowering in a lonely word;

Poet of the happy Tityrus piping underneath his beechen bowers;
Poet of the poet-satyr whom the laughing shepherd bound with flowers;

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying in the blissful years again to be,
Summers of the snakeless meadow, unlaborious earth and oarless sea;

Thou that seest Universal Nature moved by Universal Mind;
Thou majestic in thy sadness at the doubtful doom of human kind;

Light among the vanished ages; star that gildest yet this phantom shore;
Golden branch amid the shadows, kings and realms that pass to rise no more;

Now thy Forum roars no longer, fallen every purple Cæsar's dome—
Though thine ocean-roll of rhythm sound forever of Imperial Rome—

Now the Rome of slaves hath perished, and the Rome of freemen holds her place,
I, from out the Northern Island sundered once from all the human race,

I salute thee, Mantovano, I that loved thee since my day began,
Wielder of the stateliest measure ever molded by the lips of man.

(1882)

'FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE'

Row us out from Desenzano, to your Sirmione row!
So they rowed, and there we landed—'O venusta Sirmio!'
There to me through all the groves of olive in the summer glow,
There beneath the Roman ruin where the purple flowers grow,
Came that 'Ave atque Vale' of the Poet's hopeless woe,
Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen hundred years ago,
'Frater Ave atque Vale'—as we wandered to and fro,
Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the Garda Lake below,
Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-silvery Sirmio!

(1883)

VASTNESS

Many a hearth upon our dark globe sighs after many a vanished face,
Many a planet by many a sun may roll with the dust of a vanished race.

Raving politics, never at rest—as this poor earth's pale history runs,—
What is it all but a trouble of ants in the gleam of a million million of suns?

Lies upon this side, lies upon that side, truthless violence mourned by the wise,

Thousands of voices drowning his own in a popular torrent of lies upon lies;

Stately purposes, valor in battle, glorious annals of army and fleet,
Death for the right cause, death for the wrong cause, trumpets of victory, groans of defeat;

Innocence seethed in her mother's milk, and Charity setting the martyr aflame;
Thraldom who walks with the banner of Freedom, and recks not to ruin a realm in her name.

Faith at her zenith, or all but lost in the gloom of doubts that darken the schools;
Craft with a bunch of all-heal in her hand, followed up by her vassal legion of fools;

Trade flying over a thousand seas with her spice and her vintage, her silk and her corn;
Desolate offing, sailorless harbors, famishing populace, wharves forlorn;

Star of the morning, Hope in the sunrise; gloom of the evening, Life at a close;
Pleasure who flaunts on her wide downway with her flying robe and her poisoned rose;

Pain that has crawled from the corpse of Pleasure, a worm which writhes all day, and at night
Stirs up again in the heart of the sleeper, and stings him back to the curse of the light;

Wealth with his wines and his wedded harlots; honest Poverty, bare to the bone;
Opulent Avarice, lean as Poverty; Flattery gilding the rift in a throne;

Fame blowing out from her golden trumpet a jubilant challenge to Time and to Fate;
Slander, her shadow, sowing the nettle on all the laureled graves of the great;

Love for the maiden, crowned with marriage, no regrets for aught that has been,
Household happiness, gracious children, debtless competence, golden mean;

National hatreds of whole generations, and pigmy spites of the village spire;

Vows that will last to the last death-rackle, and vows that are snapped in a moment of fire;

He that has lived for the lust of the minute, and died in the doing it, flesh without mind;
He that has nailed all flesh to the Cross, till Self died out in the love of his kind;

Spring and Summer and Autumn and Winter, and all these old revolutions of earth;
All new-old revolutions of Empire — change of the tide — what is all of it worth?

What the philosophies, all the sciences, poesy, varying voices of prayer?
All that is noblest, all that is basest, all that is filthy with all that is fair?

What is it all, if we all of us end but in being our own corpse-coffins at last?
Swallowed in Vastness, lost in Silence, drowned in the deeps of a meaningless Past?

What but a murmur of gnats in the gloom, or a moment's anger of bees in their hive? —

. . . . . .

Peace, let it be! for I loved him, and love him for ever: the dead are not dead but alive. (1885)

CROSSING THE BAR

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

(1889)

ROBERT BROWNING (1812–1889)

Browning, born in Camberwell, a London suburb, was the son of a clerk in the Bank of England, who gave him a good education and encouraged his youthful inclination towards poetry. His first poem, *Pauline, the Fragment of a Confession*, was published anonymously in 1833; it is strongly marked by the influence of Shelley, and gives only a hint of its author's later style. After a visit to Russia, he produced *Paracelsus* (1835), which shows a considerable advance in artistic power, especially in the delineation of character. It brought about an invitation from Macready, the leading actor-manager of the day, to write a play, and in response *Strafford* was written and acted in 1837, with only moderate success. Browning wrote other plays, some for the stage and others for the study, *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* being his best tragedy, and *Colombe's Birthday* his best comedy. Meanwhile he was working at a long narrative poem, *Sordello*, discussing the philosophic issues raised in connection with the life of a medieval troubadour; for the historical background he made elaborate studies in the British Museum and in Italy, to which he paid his first visit in 1838. *Sordello* was published in 1840, and had an unfavorable reception, owing to its extraordinarily concise and allusive style, which made it exceedingly difficult to understand. Browning was compelled to issue his next volumes in very cheap form at his own expense; the early numbers of the *Bells and Pomegranates* series, as he called it, could be bought for a few cents. The first issue, a dramatic poem entitled *Pippa Passes*, at once became popular, but many years elapsed before the injury done to the poet's reputation by *Sordello* was overcome.

The crucial event in Browning's life and in his poetic career was his marriage in 1846 to the most gifted of English poetesses, Elizabeth Barrett: owing partly to the state of her health and partly to her father's disapproval of the match, they lived in Italy, chiefly at Florence, till Mrs. Browning's death in 1861. During his married life Browning produced his best work — the dramatic monologues included in the volume known as *Men and Women* (1855). His wife's influence is also to be discerned in another collection of shorter poems, *Dramatis Personæ* (1864), and in his longest narrative poem, *The Ring and the Book* (1868-9), an elaborate treatment of a Roman murder trial, of which Browning found the pleadings in an old book he picked up from a second-hand book stall at Florence. He did not return to Florence after the death of his wife, but resided in London, and slowly won for himself a leading place in public esteem along with Tennyson, with whom he was on very friendly terms. His later work is marred by an excessive tendency to philosophical speculation and psychological analysis as well as grotesqueness of expression, but these defects are naturally most noticeable in his longer poems. He continued to produce beautiful lyrics and dramatic monologues of unsurpassed power and intensity until his death at Venice in 1889.

It is probably by his shorter rather than by his longer poems that Browning will hold his place among the leading English poets. He is unsurpassed as a master of the dramatic monologue — a short poem in which the speaker reveals his soul at some critical moment by telling his thoughts or his story to someone else. Although Browning had unusual metrical facility, he indulged at times in abrupt transitions and grotesque rimes which give to his work an appearance of oddity and sometimes of obscurity. The charge of intentional obscurity sometimes leveled against him is, of course, absurd. He wrote to an admirer who drew attention to this accusation: 'I can have little doubt that my writing has been in the main too hard for many I should have been pleased to communicate with; but I never designedly tried to puzzle people, as some of my critics have supposed. On the other hand, I never pretended to offer such literature as should be a substitute for a cigar or a game at dominoes to an idle man. So, perhaps, on the whole I get my deserts, and something over — not a crowd, but a few I value more.' Swinburne's comment was that Browning is 'something too much the reverse of obscure; he is too brilliant and subtle for the ready reader of a ready writer to follow with any certainty the track of an intelligence which moves with such incessant rapidity. . . . He never thinks but at full speed; and the rate of his thought is to that of another man's as the speed of a railway to that of a waggon, or the speed of a telegraph to that of a railway.' Fortunately for the ordinary reader, his best poems are not his most difficult ones, and the patient student will find that even his worst are marked by extraordinary intellectual vigor and insight into character. While his reputation has hardly kept the supreme place given to it by his admirers at the close of the Victorian era, he remains one of the greatest figures in English poetry, remarkable alike for his message to his time and for the skill and power with which he delivered it.

SONGS FROM 'PIPPA PASSES'

I

ALL SERVICE RANKS THE SAME WITH GOD

All service ranks the same with God:
If now, as formerly he trod
Paradise, his presence fills
Our earth, each only as God wills
Can work — God's puppets, best and worst,
Are we; there is no last nor first.

II

THE YEAR'S AT THE SPRING

The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn:
God's in his heaven —
All's right with the world!

III

GIVE HER BUT A LEAST EXCUSE TO LOVE ME

Give her but a least excuse to love me!
When — where —
How — can this arm establish her above me,
If fortune fixed her as my lady there,
There already, to eternally reprove me?
('Hist!' — said Kate the Queen;
But 'Oh!' — cried the maiden, binding her tresses,
''T is only a page that carols unseen,
Crumbling your hounds their messes!')

Is she wronged? — To the rescue of her honor,
My heart!
Is she poor? — What costs it to be styled a donor?
Merely an earth to cleave, a sea to part.
But that fortune should have thrust all this upon her!
('Nay, list!' — bade Kate the Queen;
And still cried the maiden, binding her tresses,
''Tis only a page that carols unseen,
Fitting your hawks their jesses!')

(1841)

MY LAST DUCHESS

FERRARA

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will 't please you sit and look at her? I said
'Frà Pandolf' by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 't was not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say, 'Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much,' or 'Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat:' such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart — how shall I say? — too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 't was all one! My favor at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace — all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men, — good! but thanked
Somehow — I know not how — as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who 'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech — (which I have not) — to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, 'Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark' — and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
— E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose

Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will 't please you rise? We 'll meet
The company below then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretense
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we 'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

COUNT GISMOND

AIX IN PROVENCE

I

Christ God who savest man, save most
Of men Count Gismond who saved me!
Count Gauthier, when he chose his post,
Chose time and place and company
To suit it; when he struck at length
My honor, 't was with all his strength.

II

And doubtlessly ere he could draw
All points to one, he must have schemed!
That miserable morning saw
Few half so happy as I seemed,
While being dressed in queen's array
To give our tourney prize away.

III

I thought they loved me, did me grace
To please themselves; 't was all their deed;
God makes, or fair or foul, our face;
If showing mine so caused to bleed
My cousins' hearts, they should have dropped
A word, and straight the play had stopped.

IV

They, too, so beauteous! Each a queen
By virtue of her brow and breast:
Not needing to be crowned, I mean,
As I do. E'en when I was dressed,
Had either of them spoke, instead
Of glancing sideways with still head!

V

But no: they let me laugh, and sing
My birthday song quite through, adjust
The last rose in my garland, fling
A last look on the mirror, trust
My arms to each an arm of theirs,
And so descend the castle-stairs —

VI

And come out on the morning-troop
Of merry friends who kissed my cheek,
And called me queen, and made me stoop
Under the canopy — (a streak
That pierced it, of the outside sun,
Powdered with gold its gloom's soft dun) —

VII

And they could let me take my state
And foolish throne amid applause
Of all come there to celebrate
My queen's-day — Oh, I think the cause
Of much was, they forgot no crowd
Makes up for parents in their shroud!

VIII

Howe'er that be, all eyes were bent
Upon me, when my cousins cast
Theirs down; 't was time I should present
The victor's crown, but . . . there, 't will last
No long time . . . the old mist again
Blinds me as then it did. How vain!

IX

See! Gismond 's at the gate, in talk
With his two boys: I can proceed.
Well, at that moment, who should stalk
Forth boldly — to my face, indeed —
But Gauthier, and he thundered, 'Stay!'
And all stayed. 'Bring no crowns, I say!

X

'Bring torches! Wind the penance-sheet
About her! Let her shun the chaste,
Or lay herself before their feet!
Shall she whose body I embraced
A night long, queen it in the day?
For honor's sake no crowns, I say!'

XI

I? What I answered? As I live,
I never fancied such a thing

As answer possible to give.
What says the body when they spring
Some monstrous torture-engine's whole
Strength on it? No more says the soul.

XII

Till out strode Gismond; then I knew
That I was saved. I never met
His face before, but, at first view,
I felt quite sure that God had set
Himself to Satan; who would spend
A minute's mistrust on the end?

XIII

He strode to Gauthier, in his throat
Gave him the lie, then struck his mouth
With one back-handed blow that wrote
In blood men's verdict there. North, South,
East, West, I looked. The lie was dead,
And damned, and truth stood up instead.

XIV

This glads me most, that I enjoyed
The heart of the joy, with my content
In watching Gismond unalloyed
By any doubt of the event:
God took that on him — I was bid
Watch Gismond for my part: I did.

XV

Did I not watch him while he let
His armorer just brace his greaves,
Rivet his hauberk, on the fret
The while! His foot . . . my memory leaves
No least stamp out, nor how anon
He pulled his ringing gauntlets on.

XVI

And e'en before the trumpet's sound
Was finished, prone lay the false knight,
Prone as his lie, upon the ground:
Gismond flew at him, used no sleight
O' the sword, but open-breasted rove,
Cleaving till out the truth he clove.

XVII

Which done, he dragged him to my feet
And said, 'Here die, but end thy breath
In full confession, lest thou fleet
From my first, to God's second death!
Say, hast thou lied?' And, 'I have lied
To God and her,' he said, and died.

XVIII

Then Gismond, kneeling to me, asked
— What safe my heart holds, though no word
Could I repeat now, if I tasked
My powers for ever, to a third
Dear even as you are. Pass the rest
Until I sank upon his breast.

XIX

Over my head his arm he flung
Against the world; and scarce I felt
His sword (that dripped by me and swung)
A little shifted in its belt;
For he began to say the while
How South our home lay many a mile.

XX

So 'mid the shouting multitude
We two walked forth to never more
Return. My cousins have pursued
Their life, untroubled as before
I vexed them. Gauthier's dwelling-place
God lighten! May his soul find grace!

XXI

Our elder boy has got the clear
Great brow; though when his brother's black
Full eye shows scorn, it . . . Gismond here?
And have you brought my tercel back?
I just was telling Adela
How many birds it struck since May.

(1842)

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

I

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon;
A mile or so away,
On a little mound, Napoleon
Stood on our storming-day;
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,
Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow
Oppressive with its mind.

II

Just as perhaps he mused, 'My plans
That soar, to earth may fall,
Let once my army-leader Lannes
Waver at yonder wall,'—
Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew
A rider, bound on bound
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew
Until he reached the mound.

III

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy:
You hardly could suspect —

(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
Scarce any blood came through)
You looked twice ere you saw his breast
Was all but shot in two.

IV

'Well,' cried he, 'Emperor, by God's grace
We 've got you Ratisbon!
The Marshal 's in the market-place,
And you 'll be there anon
To see your flag-bird flap his vans
Where I, to heart's desire,
Perched him!' The chief's eye flashed; his plans
Soared up again like fire.

V

The chief's eye flashed; but presently
Softened itself, as sheathes
A film the mother-eagle's eye
When her bruised eaglet breathes;
'You 're wounded!' 'Nay,' the soldier's pride
Touched to the quick, he said:
'I 'm killed, Sire!' And his chief beside,
Smiling the boy fell dead.

(1842)

THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND

That second time they hunted me
From hill to plain, from shore to sea,
And Austria, hounding far and wide
Her blood-hounds through the country-side,
Breathed hot and instant on my trace,—
I made six days a hiding-place
Of that dry green old aqueduct
Where I and Charles, when boys, have plucked
The fire-flies from the roof above,
Bright creeping through the moss they love:
— How long it seems since Charles was lost!
Six days the soldiers crossed and crossed
The country in my very sight;
And when that peril ceased at night,
The sky broke out in red dismay
With signal fires; well, there I lay
Close covered o'er in my recess,
Up to the neck in ferns and cress,
Thinking on Metternich our friend,
And Charles's miserable end,
And much beside, two days; the third,
Hunger o'ercame me when I heard
The peasants from the village go
To work among the maize; you know,
With us in Lombardy, they bring
Provisions packed on mules, a string
With little bells that cheer their task,
And casks, and boughs on every cask
To keep the sun's heat from the wine;
These I let pass in jingling line,
And, close on them, dear noisy crew,
The peasants from the village, too;
For at the very rear would troop
Their wives and sisters in a group
To help, I knew. When these had passed,
I threw my glove to strike the last,
Taking the chance: she did not start,
Much less cry out, but stooped apart,
One instant rapidly glanced round,
And saw me beckon from the ground.
A wild bush grows and hides my crypt;
She picked my glove up while she stripped
A branch off, then rejoined the rest
With that; my glove lay in her breast.
Then I drew breath; they disappeared:
It was for Italy I feared.

An hour, and she returned alone
Exactly where my glove was thrown.
Meanwhile came many thoughts; on me
Rested the hopes of Italy.
I had devised a certain tale
Which, when 't was told her, could not fail
Persuade a peasant of its truth;
I meant to call a freak of youth
This hiding, and give hopes of pay,
And no temptation to betray.
But when I saw that woman's face,
Its calm simplicity of grace,
Our Italy's own attitude
In which she walked thus far, and stood,
Planting each naked foot so firm,
To crush the snake and spare the worm —
At first sight of her eyes, I said,
'I am that man upon whose head
They fix the price, because I hate
The Austrians over us; the State
Will give you gold — oh, gold so much —
If you betray me to their clutch,
And be your death, for aught I know,
If once they find you saved their foe.
Now, you must bring me food and drink,
And also paper, pen and ink,
And carry safe what I shall write
To Padua, which you 'll reach at night
Before the duomo shuts; go in,
And wait till Tenebræ begin;
Walk to the third confessional,
Between the pillar and the wall,
And kneeling whisper, *Whence comes peace?*
Say it a second time, then cease;
And if the voice inside returns,
From Christ and Freedom; what concerns

The cause of Peace?— for answer, slip
My letter where you placed your lip;
Then come back happy we have done
Our mother service — I, the son,
As you the daughter of our land!'

Three mornings more, she took her stand
In the same place, with the same eyes:
I was no surer of sunrise
Than of her coming. We conferred
Of her own prospects, and I heard
She had a lover — stout and tall,
She said — then let her eyelids fall,
'He could do much'— as if some doubt
Entered her heart,— then, passing out,
'She could not speak for others, who
Had other thoughts; herself she knew;'
And so she brought me drink and food.
After four days, the scouts pursued
Another path; at last arrived
The help my Paduan friends contrived
To furnish me: she brought the news.
For the first time I could not choose
But kiss her hand, and lay my own
Upon her head — 'This faith was shown
To Italy, our mother; she
Uses my hand and blesses thee.'
She followed down to the sea-shore;
I left and never saw her more.

How very long since I have thought
Concerning — much less wished for — aught
Beside the good of Italy,
For which I live and mean to die!
I never was in love; and since
Charles proved false, what shall now convince
My inmost heart I have a friend?
However, if I pleased to spend
Real wishes on myself — say, three —
I know at least what one should be.
I would grasp Metternich until
I felt his red wet throat distil
In blood through these two hands. And next
— Nor much for that am I perplexed —
Charles, perjured traitor, for his part,
Should die slow of a broken heart
Under his new employers. Last
— Ah, there, what should I wish? For fast
Do I grow old and out of strength.
If I resolved to seek at length
My father's house again, how scared
They all would look, and unprepared!
My brothers live in Austria's pay
— Disowned me long ago, men say;
And all my early mates who used
To praise me so — perhaps induced
More than one early step of mine —
Are turning wise: while some opine
'Freedom grows license,' some suspect
'Haste breeds delay,' and recollect
They always said, such premature
Beginnings never could endure!
So, with a sullen 'All 's for best,'
The land seems settling to its rest.
I think then, I should wish to stand
This evening in that dear, lost land,
Over the sea the thousand miles,
And know if yet that woman smiles
With the calm smile; some little farm
She lives in there, no doubt; what harm
If I sat on the door-side bench,
And, while her spindle made a trench
Fantastically in the dust,
Inquired of all her fortunes — just
Her children's ages and their names,
And what may be the husband's aims
For each of them. I 'd talk this out,
And sit there, for an hour about,
Then kiss her hand once more, and lay
Mine on her head, and go my way.

So much for idle wishing — how
It steals the time! To business now.

(1845)

THE LOST LEADER

I

Just for a handful of silver he left us,
Just for a riband to stick in his coat —
Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
Lost all the others she lets us devote;
They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver,
So much was theirs who so little allowed:
How all our copper had gone for his service!
Rags — were they purple, his heart had been proud!
We that had loved him so, followed him, honored him,
Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,
Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
Made him our pattern to live and to die!
Shakspere was of us, Milton was for us,
Burns, Shelley, were with us,— they watch from their graves!
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,
— He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!

II

We shall march prospering,— not through his presence;
Songs may inspirit us,— not from his lyre;
Deeds will be done,— while he boasts his quiescence,
Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire;
Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,
One task more declined, one more foot-path untrod,
One more devil's-triumph and sorrow for angels,
One wrong more to man, one more insult to God!
Life's night begins: let him never come back to us!
There would be doubt, hesitation and pain,
Forced praise on our part — the glimmer of twilight,
Never glad confident morning again!
Best fight on well, for we taught him — strike gallantly,
Menace our heart ere we master his own;
Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,
Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne!

(1845)

HOME-THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

I

Oh, to be in England,
Now that April 's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brush-wood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England — now!

II

And after April, when May follows,
And the white-throat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops — at the bent spray's edge —
That 's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
— Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

(1845)

HOME-THOUGHTS FROM THE SEA

Nobly, nobly, Cape Saint Vincent to the Northwest died away;
Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into Cadiz Bay;
Bluish 'mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar lay;
In the dimmest Northeast distance dawned Gibraltar, grand and gray;
'Here and here did England help me: how can I help England?'— say,
Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to praise and pray,
While Jove's planet rises yonder, silent over Africa.

(1845)

SAUL

I

Said Abner, 'At last thou art come! Ere I tell, ere thou speak,
Kiss my cheek, wish me well!' Then I wished it, and did kiss his cheek.
And he: 'Since the King, O my friend, for thy countenance sent,
Neither drunken nor eaten have we; nor until from his tent
Thou return with the joyful assurance the King liveth yet,
Shall our lip with the honey be bright, with the water be wet.
For out of the black mid-tent's silence, a space of three days,
Not a sound hath escaped to thy servants, of prayer nor of praise,
To betoken that Saul and the Spirit have ended their strife,
And that, faint in his triumph, the monarch sinks back upon life.

II

'Yet now my heart leaps, O beloved! God's child with his dew
On thy gracious gold hair, and those lilies still living and blue

Just broken to twine round thy harp-strings, as if no wild heat
Were now raging to torture the desert.'

III

Then I, as was meet,
Knelt down to the God of my fathers, and rose on my feet,
And ran o'er the sand burnt to powder. The tent was unlooped;
I pulled up the spear that obstructed, and under I stooped;
Hands and knees on the slippery grass-patch, all withered and gone,
That extends to the second enclosure, I groped my way on
Till I felt where the foldskirts fly open. Then once more I prayed,
And opened the foldskirts and entered, and was not afraid
But spoke, 'Here is David, thy servant!' And no voice replied.
At the first I saw naught but the blackness; but soon I descried
A something more black than the blackness — the vast, the upright
Main prop which sustains the pavilion; and slow into sight
Grew a figure against it, gigantic and blackest of all.
Then a sunbeam, that burst through the tent roof, showed Saul.

IV

He stood as erect as that tent-prop, both arms stretched out wide
On the great cross-support in the center, that goes to each side;
He relaxed not a muscle, but hung there as, caught in his pangs
And waiting his change, the king serpent all heavily hangs,
Far away from his kind, in the pine, till deliverance come
With the spring-time,— so agonized Saul, drear and stark, blind and dumb.

V

Then I tuned my harp,— took off the lilies we twine round its chords
Lest they snap 'neath the stress of the noontide — those sunbeams like swords!
And I first played the tune all our sheep know, as, one after one,
So docile they come to the pen-door till folding be done.
They are white and untorn by the bushes, for lo, they have fed
Where the long grasses stifle the water within the stream's bed;
And now one after one seeks its lodging, as star follows star
Into eve and the blue far above us,— so blue and so far!

VI

— Then the tune, for which quails on the cornland will each leave his mate
To fly after the player; then, what makes the crickets elate
Till for boldness they fight one another; and then, what has weight
To set the quick jerboa a-musing outside his sand-house —
There are none such as he for a wonder, half bird and half mouse!
God made all the creatures and gave them our love and our fear,
To give sign, we and they are his children, one family here.

VII

Then I played the help-tune of our reapers, their wine-song, when hand
Grasps at hand, eye lights eye in good friendship, and great hearts expand
And grow one in the sense of this world's life.— And then, the last song
When the dead man is praised on his journey — 'Bear, bear him along
With his few faults shut up like dead flowerets! Are balm-seeds not here
To console us? The land has none left such as he on the bier.
Oh, would we might keep thee, my brother!'
— And then, the glad chaunt
Of the marriage,— first go the young maidens, next, she whom we vaunt
As the beauty, the pride of our dwelling. — And then, the great march
Wherein man runs to man to assist him and buttress an arch
Naught can break; who shall harm them, our friends? — Then, the chorus intoned
As the Levites go up to the altar in glory enthroned.
But I stopped here: for here in the darkness Saul groaned.

VIII

And I paused, held my breath in such silence, and listened apart;
And the tent shook, for mighty Saul shuddered: and sparkles 'gan dart

From the jewels that woke in his turban, at once with a start,
All its lordly male-sapphires, and rubies courageous at heart.
So the head; but the body still moved not, still hung there erect.
And I bent once again to my playing, pursued it unchecked,
As I sang: —

IX

'Oh, our manhood's prime vigor! No spirit feels waste,
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor sinew unbraced.
Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock up to rock,
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree, the cool silver shock
Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the hunt of the bear,
And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in his lair.
And the meal, the rich dates yellowed over with gold dust divine,
And the locust-flesh steeped in the pitcher, the full draft of wine,
And the sleep in the dried river-channel where bulrushes tell
That the water was wont to go warbling so softly and well.
How good is man's life, the mere living? how fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses forever in joy!
Hast thou loved the white locks of thy father, whose sword thou didst guard
When he trusted thee forth with the armies, for glorious reward?
Didst thou see the thin hands of thy mother, held up as men sung
The low song of the nearly-departed, and hear her faint tongue
Joining in while it could to the witness, "Let one more attest
I have lived, seen God's hand through a lifetime, and all was for best?"
Then they sung through their tears in strong triumph, not much, but the rest.
And thy brothers, the help and the contest, the working whence grew
Such result as, from seething grape-bundles, the spirit strained true:
And the friends of thy boyhood — that boyhood of wonder and hope,
Present promise and wealth of the future beyond the eye's scope,—
Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch; a people is thine:
And all gifts, which the world offers singly, on one head combine!
On one head, all the beauty and strength, love and rage (like the throe
That, a-work in the rock, helps its labor and lets the gold go),
High ambition and deeds which surpass it, fame crowning them,— all
Brought to blaze on the head of one creature — King Saul.'

X

And lo, with that leap of my spirit,— heart, hand, harp and voice,
Each lifting Saul's name out of sorrow, each bidding rejoice
Saul's fame in the light it was made for — as when, dare I say,
The Lord's army, in rapture of service, strains through its array,
And upsoareth the cherubim-chariot — 'Saul!' cried I, and stopped,
And waited the thing that should follow. Then Saul, who hung propped
By the tent's cross-support in the center, was struck by his name.
Have ye seen when Spring's arrowy summons goes right to the aim,
And some mountain, the last to withstand her, that held (he alone,
While the vale laughed in freedom and flowers) on a broad bust of stone
A year's snow bound about for a breastplate,— leaves grasp of the sheet?
Fold on fold all at once it crowds thunderously down to his feet,
And there fronts you, stark, black, but alive yet, your mountain of old,
With his rents, the successive bequeathings of ages untold —
Yea, each harm got in fighting your battles, each furrow and scar
Of his head thrust 'twixt you and the tempest — all hail, there they are!
— Now again to be softened with verdure, again hold the nest
Of the dove, tempt the goat and its young to the green on his crest
For their food in the ardors of summer. One long shudder thrilled
All the tent till the very air tingled, then sank and was stilled
At the King's self left standing before me, released and aware.
What was gone, what remained? All to traverse 'twixt hope and despair;

Death was past, life not come: so he waited. Awhile his right hand
Held the brow, helped the eyes left too vacant, forthwith to remand
To their place what new objects should enter: 't was Saul as before.
I looked up, and dared gaze at those eyes, nor was hurt any more
Than by slow pallid sunsets in autumn, ye watch from the shore,
At their sad level gaze o'er the ocean — a sun's slow decline
Over hills which, resolved in stern silence, o'erlap and entwine
Base with base to knit strength more intensely; so, arm folded arm
O'er the chest whose slow heavings subsided.

XI

What spell or what charm
(For, awhile there was trouble within me), what next should I urge
To sustain him where song had restored him? — Song filled to the verge
His cup with the wine of this life, pressing all that it yields
Of mere fruitage, the strength and the beauty: beyond, on what fields,
Glean a vintage more potent and perfect to brighten the eye,
And bring blood to the lip, and commend them the cup they put by?
He saith, 'It is good;' still he drinks not: he lets me praise life,
Gives assent, yet would die for his own part.

XII

Then fancies grew rife
Which had come long ago on the pasture, when round me the sheep
Fed in silence — above, the one eagle wheeled slow as in sleep;
And I lay in my hollow and mused on the world that might lie
'Neath his ken, though I saw but the strip 'twixt the hill and the sky:
And I laughed — 'Since my days are ordained to be passed with my flocks,
Let me people at least, with my fancies, the plains and the rocks,
Dream the life I am never to mix with, and image the show
Of mankind as they live in those fashions I hardly shall know!
Schemes of life, its best rules and right uses, the courage that gains,
And the prudence that keeps what men strive for!' And now these old trains
Of vague thought came again; I grew surer; so, once more the string
Of my harp made response to my spirit, as thus —

XIII

'Yea, my King,'
I began — 'thou dost well in rejecting mere comforts that spring
From the mere mortal life held in common by man and by brute:
In our flesh grows the branch of this life, In our soul it bears fruit.
Thou hast marked the slow rise of the tree, — how its stem trembled first
Till it passed the kid's lip, the stag's antler; then safely outburst
The fan-branches all round; and thou mindest when these too, in turn
Broke a-bloom and the palm-tree seemed perfect: yet more was to learn,
E'en the good that comes in with the palm-fruit. Our dates shall we slight,
When their juice brings a cure for all sorrow? or care for the plight
Of the palm's self whose slow growth produced them? Not so! stem and branch
Shall decay, nor be known in their place, while the palm-wine shall stanch
Every wound of man's spirit in winter. I pour thee such wine.
Leave the flesh to the fate it was fit for! the spirit be thine!
By the spirit, when age shall o'ercome thee, thou still shalt enjoy
More indeed, than at first when inconscious, the life of a boy.
Crush that life, and behold its wine running! Each deed thou hast done
Dies, revives, goes to work in the world; until e'en as the sun
Looking down on the earth, though clouds spoil him, though tempests efface,
Can find nothing his own deed produced not, must everywhere trace
The results of his past summer-prime, — so, each ray of thy will,
Every flash of thy passion and prowess, long over, shall thrill
Thy whole people, the countless, with ardor, till they too give forth
A like cheer to their sons; who in turn, fill the South and the North
With the radiance thy deed was the germ of. Carouse in the past!
But the license of age has its limit; thou diest at last:

As the lion when age dims his eyeball, the rose at her height,
So with man — so his power and his beauty for ever take flight.
No! Again a long draft of my soul-wine! Look forth o'er the years!
Thou hast done now with eyes for the actual; begin with the seer's!
Is Saul dead? In the depth of the vale make his tomb — bid arise
A gray mountain of marble heaped four-square, till, built to the skies,
Let it mark where the great First King slumbers: whose fame would ye know?
Up above see the rock's naked face, where the record shall go
In great characters cut by the scribe, — Such was Saul, so he did;
With the sages directing the work, by the populace chid,—
For not half, they 'll affirm, is comprised there! Which fault to amend,
In the grove with his kind grows the cedar, whereon they shall spend
(See, in tablets 't is level before them) their praise, and record
With the gold of the graver, Saul's story,— the statesman's great word
Side by side with the poet's sweet comment. The river 's a-wave
With smooth paper-reeds grazing each other when prophet-winds rave:
So the pen gives unborn generations their due and their part
In thy being! Then, first of the mighty, thank God that thou art!'

XIV

And behold while I sang . . . but O thou who didst grant me that day,
And before it not seldom hast granted thy help to essay,
Carry on and complete an adventure,— my shield and my sword
In that act where my soul was thy servant, thy word was my word,—
Still be with me, who then at the summit of human endeavor
And scaling the highest, man's thought could, gazed hopeless as ever
On the new stretch of heaven above me — till, mighty to save,
Just one lift of thy hand cleared that distance — God's throne from man's grave!
Let me tell out my tale to its ending — my voice to my heart
Which can scarce dare believe in what marvels last night I took part,
As this morning I gather the fragments, alone with my sheep,
And still fear lest the terrible glory evanish like sleep!
For I wake in the gray dewy covert, while Hebron upheaves
The dawn struggling with night on his shoulder, and Kidron retrieves
Slow the damage of yesterday's sunshine.

XV

I say then,— my song
While I sang thus, assuring the monarch, and, ever more strong,
Made a proffer of good to console him — he slowly resumed
His old motions and habitudes kingly. The right hand replumed
His black locks to their wonted composure, adjusted the swathes
Of his turban, and see — the huge sweat that his countenance bathes,
He wipes off with the robe; and he girds now his loins as of yore,
And feels slow for the armlets of price, with the clasp set before.
He is Saul, ye remember in glory,— ere error had bent
The broad brow from the daily communion; and still, though much spent
Be the life and the bearing that front you, the same, God did choose,
To receive what a man may waste, desecrate, never quite lose.
So sank he along by the tent-prop, till, stayed by the pile
Of his armor and war-cloak and garments, he leaned there awhile,
And sat out my singing,— one arm round the tent-prop, to raise
His bent head, and the other hung slack — till I touched on the praise
I foresaw from all men in all time, to the man patient there;
And thus ended, the harp falling forward. Then first I was 'ware
That he sat, as I say, with my head just above his vast knees
Which were thrust out on each side around me, like oak roots which please
To encircle a lamb when it slumbers. I looked up to know
If the best I could do had brought solace: he spoke not, but slow
Lifted up the hand slack at his side, till he laid it with care
Soft and grave, but in mild settled will, on my brow: through my hair

The large fingers were pushed, and he bent
back my head, with kind power —
All my face back, intent to peruse it, as men
do a flower.
Thus held he me there with his great eyes
that scrutinized mine —
And oh, all my heart how it loved him! but
where was the sign?
I yearned — 'Could I help thee, my father,
inventing a bliss,
I would add, to that life of the past, both
the future and this;
I would give thee new life altogether, as
good, ages hence,
As this moment,— had love but the warrant,
love's heart to dispense!'

XVI

Then the truth came upon me. No harp
more — no song more! outbroke —

XVII

'I have gone the whole round of creation:
I saw and I spoke:
I, a work of God's hand for that purpose,
received in my brain
And pronounced on the rest of his handwork
— returned him again
His creation's approval or censure: I spoke
as I saw,
I report, as a man may of God's work —
all 's love, yet all 's law.
Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me.
Each faculty tasked
To perceive him has gained an abyss, where
a dewdrop was asked.
Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels
at Wisdom laid bare.
Have I forethought? how purblind, how
blank, to the Infinite Care!
Do I task any faculty highest, to image success?
I but open my eyes,— and perfection, no
more and no less,
In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and
God is seen God
In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the
soul and the clod.
And thus looking within and around me,
I ever renew
(With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it too)
The submission of man's nothing-perfect to
God's all-complete,
As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb
to his feet.
Yet with all this abounding experience, this
deity known,
I shall dare to discover some province, some
gift of my own.
There 's a faculty pleasant to exercise, hard
to hoodwink,
I am fain to keep still in abeyance (I laugh
as I think)
Lest, insisting to claim and parade in it, wot
ye, I worst
E'en the Giver in one gift.— Behold, I could
love if I durst!
But I sink the pretension as fearing a man
may o'ertake
God's own speed in the one way of love:
I abstain for love's sake.
— What, my soul? see thus far and no
farther? when doors great and small,
Nine-and-ninety flew ope at our touch,
should the hundredth appal?
In the least things have faith, yet distrust
in the greatest of all?
Do I find love so full in my nature, God's
ultimate gift,
That I doubt his own love can compete with
it? Here, the parts shift?
Here, the creature surpass the Creator,— the
end, what Began?
Would I fain in my impotent yearning do
all for this man,
And dare doubt he alone shall not help him,
who yet alone can?
Would it ever have entered my mind, the
bare will, much less power,
To bestow on this Saul what I sang of, the
marvelous dower
Of the life he was gifted and filled with? to
make such a soul,
Such a body, and then such an earth for insphering the whole?
And doth it not enter my mind (as my warm
tears attest),
These good things being given, to go on, and
give one more, the best?
Ay, to save and redeem and restore him,
maintain at the height
This perfection,— succeed with life's dayspring, death's minute of night?
Interpose at the difficult minute, snatch Saul
the mistake,
Saul the failure, the ruin he seems now,—
and bid him awake
From the dream, the probation, the prelude,
to find himself set
Clear and safe in new light and new life,—
a new harmony yet
To be run and continued, and ended — who
knows?— or endure!
The man taught enough by life's dream, of
the rest to make sure;

By the pain-throb, triumphantly winning intensified bliss,
And the next world's reward and repose, by the struggles in this.

XVIII

'I believe it! 'T is thou, God, that givest, 't is I who receive:
In the first is the last, in thy will is my power to believe.
All 's one gift: thou canst grant it moreover, as prompt to my prayer
As I breathe out this breath, as I open these arms to the air.
From thy will, stream the worlds, life and nature, thy dread Sabaoth:
I will?—the mere atoms despise me! Why am I not loth
To look that, even that in the face too? Why is it I dare
Think but lightly of such impuissance? What stops my despair?
This;—'t is not what man Does which exalts him, but what man Would do!
See the King—I would help him but cannot, the wishes fall through.
Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow poor to enrich,
To fill up his life, starve my own out, I would—knowing which,
I know that my service is perfect. Oh, speak through me now!
Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst thou—so wilt thou!
So shall crown thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost crown—
And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up nor down
One spot for the creature to stand in! It is by no breath,
Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation joins issue with death!
As thy Love is discovered almighty, almighty be proved
Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being Beloved!
He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest shall stand the most weak.
'T is the weakness in strength, that I cry for! my flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, for ever: a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!'

XIX

I know not too well how I found my way home in the night.
There were witnesses, cohorts about me, to left and to right,
Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the alive, the aware:
I repressed, I got through them as hardly, as strugglingly there,
As a runner beset by the populace famished for news—
Life or death. The whole earth was awakened, hell loosed with her crews;
And the stars of night beat with emotion, and tingled and shot
Out in fire the strong pain of pent knowledge: but I fainted not,
For the hand still impelled me at once and supported, suppressed
All the tumult, and quenched it with quiet, and holy behest,
Till the rapture was shut in itself, and the earth sank to rest.
Anon at the dawn, all that trouble had withered from earth—
Not so much, but I saw it die out in the day's tender birth;
In the gathered intensity brought to the gray of the hills;
In the shuddering forests' held breath; in the sudden wind-thrills;
In the startled wild beasts that bore off, each with eye sidling still,
Though averted with wonder and dread; in the birds stiff and chill
That rose heavily as I approached them, made stupid with awe:
E'en the serpent that slid away silent,—he felt the new law.
The same stared in the white humid faces upturned by the flowers;
The same worked in the heart of the cedar and moved the vine-bowers:
And the little brooks witnessing murmured, persistent and low,
With their obstinate, all but hushed voices—'E'en so, it is so!'

(1845–1855)

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

I

Where the quiet-colored end of evening smiles
Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our sheep
Half-asleep

Tinkle homeward through the twilight, stray or stop
As they crop —
Was the site once of a city great and gay
(So they say),
Of our country's very capital, its prince
Ages since
Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far
Peace or war.

II

Now,— the country does not even boast a tree,
As you see,
To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills
From the hills
Intersect and give a name to (else they run
Into one),
Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires
Up like fires
O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
Bounding all,
Made of marble, men might march on nor be pressed,
Twelve abreast.

III

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass
Never was!
Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'erspreads
And embeds
Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
Stock or stone —
Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe
Long ago;
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame
Struck them tame;
And that glory and that shame alike, the gold
Bought and sold.

IV

Now,— the single little turret that remains
On the plains,
By the caper overrooted, by the gourd
Overscored,
While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks
Through the chinks —
Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time
Sprang sublime,
And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced
As they raced,
And the monarch and his minions and his dames
Viewed the games.

V

And I know — while thus the quiet-colored eve
Smiles to leave
To their folding, all our many tinkling fleece
In such peace,
And the slopes and rills in undistinguished gray
Melt away —
That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair
Waits me there
In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul
For the goal,
When the king looked, where she looks now, breathless, dumb
Till I come.

VI

But he looked upon the city, every side,
Far and wide,
All the mountains topped with temples, all the glades'
Colonnades,
All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts,— and then,
All the men!
When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,
Either hand
On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace
Of my face,
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech
Each on each.

VII

In one year they sent a million fighters forth
South and North,
And they built their gods a brazen pillar high
As the sky,
Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force —
Gold, of course.
Oh heart! oh blood that freezes, blood that burns!
Earth's returns

For whole centuries of folly, noise and sin!
Shut them in,
With their triumphs and their glories and the rest!
Love is best.

(1855)

A WOMAN'S LAST WORD

I

Let 's contend no more, Love,
Strive nor weep:
All be as before, Love,
— Only sleep!

II

What so wild as words are?
I and thou
In debate, as birds are,
Hawk on bough!

III

See the creature stalking
While we speak!
Hush and hide the talking,
Cheek on cheek.

IV

What so false as truth is,
False to thee?
Where the serpent's tooth is
Shun the tree —

V

Where the apple reddens
Never pry —
Lest we lose our Edens,
Eve and I.

VI

Be a god and hold me
With a charm!
Be a man and fold me
With thine arm!

VII

Teach me, only teach, Love!
As I ought
I will speak thy speech, Love,
Think thy thought —

VIII

Meet, if thou require it,
Both demands,
Laying flesh and spirit
In thy hands.

IX

That shall be to-morrow,
Not to-night:
I must bury sorrow
Out of sight:

X

— Must a little weep, Love,
(Foolish me!),
And so fall asleep, Love
Loved by thee.

(1855)

A TOCCATA OF GALUPPI'S

I

Oh, Galuppi, Baldassare, this is very sad to find!
I can hardly misconceive you; it would prove me deaf and blind;
But although I take your meaning, 't is with such a heavy mind!

II

Here you come with your old music, and here 's all the good it brings.
What, they lived once thus at Venice where the merchants were the kings,
Where St. Mark's is, where the Doges used to wed the sea with rings?

III

Ay, because the sea 's the street there; and 't is arched by . . . what you call
. . . Shylock's bridge with houses on it, where they kept the carnival:
I was never out of England — it 's as if I saw it all.

IV

Did young people take their pleasure when the sea was warm in May?
Balls and masks begun at midnight, burning ever to mid-day,
When they made up fresh adventures for the morrow, do you say?

V

Was a lady such a lady, cheeks so round and lips so red,—
On her neck the small face buoyant, like a bell-flower on its bed,
O'er the breast's superb abundance where a man might base his head?

VI

Well, and it was graceful of them — they 'd break talk off and afford
— She, to bite her mask's black velvet — he, to finger on his sword,
While you sat and played Toccatas, stately at the clavichord?

VII

What? Those lesser thirds so plaintive, sixths diminished, sigh on sigh,
Told them something? Those suspensions, those solutions — 'Must we die?'
Those commiserating sevenths — 'Life might last! we can but try!'

VIII

'Were you happy?' — 'Yes.' — 'And are you still as happy?' — 'Yes. And you?'
— 'Then, more kisses!' — 'Did I stop them, when a million seemed so few?'
Hark, the dominant's persistence till it must be answered to!

IX

So, an octave struck the answer. Oh, they praised you, I dare say!
'Brave Galuppi! that was music! good alike at grave and gay!
I can always leave off talking when I hear a master play!'

X

Then they left you for their pleasure: till in due time, one by one,
Some with lives that came to nothing, some with deeds as well undone,
Death stepped tacitly and took them where they never see the sun.

XI

But when I sit down to reason, think to take my stand nor swerve,
While I triumph o'er a secret wrung from nature's close reserve,
In you come with your cold music till I creep through every nerve.

XII

Yes, you, like a ghostly cricket, creaking where a house was burned:
'Dust and ashes, dead and done with, Venice spent what Venice earned.
The soul, doubtless, is immortal — where a soul can be discerned,

XIII

'Yours for instance: you know physics, something of geology,
Mathematics are your pastime; souls shall rise in their degree;
Butterflies may dread extinction, — you 'll not die, it cannot be!

XIV

'As for Venice and her people, merely born to bloom and drop,
Here on earth they bore their fruitage, mirth and folly were the crop:
What of soul was left, I wonder, when the kissing had to stop?

XV

'Dust and ashes!' So you creak it, and I want the heart to scold.
Dear dead women, with such hair, too — what 's become of all the gold
Used to hang and brush their bosoms? I feel chilly and grown old.

(1855)

MY STAR

All that I know
Of a certain star
Is, it can throw
(Like the angled spar)
Now a dart of red,
Now a dart of blue;
Till my friends have said
They would fain see, too,
My star that dartles the red and the blue!
Then it stops like a bird; like a flower, hangs furled:
They must solace themselves with the Saturn above it.
What matter to me if their star is a world?
Mine has opened its soul to me; therefore I love it.

(1855)

THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER

I

I said — Then, dearest, since 't is so,
Since now at length my fate I know,
Since nothing all my love avails,
Since all, my life seemed meant for, fails,
Since this was written and needs must be —

My whole heart rises up to bless
Your name in pride and thankfulness!
Take back the hope you gave,— I claim
Only a memory of the same,
—And this beside, if you will not blame,
Your leave for one more last ride with me.

II

My mistress bent that brow of hers;
Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs
When pity would be softening through,
Fixed me a breathing-while or two
With life or death in the balance: right!
The blood replenished me again;
My last thought was at least not vain:
I and my mistress, side by side
Shall be together, breathe and ride,
So, one day more am I deified.
Who knows but the world may end to-night?

III

Hush! if you saw some western cloud
All billowy-bosomed, over-bowed
By many benedictions — sun's
And moon's and evening-star's at once —
And so, you, looking and loving best,
Conscious grew, your passion drew
Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too,
Down on you, near and yet more near,
Till flesh must fade for heaven was here! —
Thus leant she and lingered — joy and fear!
Thus lay she a moment on my breast.

IV

Then we began to ride. My soul
Smoothed itself out, a long-cramped scroll
Freshening and fluttering in the wind.
Past hopes already lay behind.
What need to strive with a life awry?
Had I said that, had I done this,
So might I gain, so might I miss.
Might she have loved me? just as well
She might have hated, who can tell!
Where had I been now if the worst befell?
And here we are riding, she and I.

V

Fail I alone, in words and deeds?
Why, all men strive, and who succeeds?
We rode; it seemed my spirit flew,
Saw other regions, cities new,
As the world rushed by on either side.
I thought,— All labor, yet no less
Bear up beneath their unsuccess.
Look at the end of work, contrast
The petty done, the undone vast,
This present of theirs with the hopeful past!
I hoped she would love me; here we ride.

VI

What hand and brain went ever paired?
What heart alike conceived and dared?
What act proved all its thought had been?
What will but felt the fleshly screen?
We ride and I see her bosom heave.
There 's many a crown for who can reach.
Ten lines, a statesman's life in each!
The flag stuck on a heap of bones,
A soldier's doing! what atones?
They scratch his name on the Abbey-stones.
My riding is better, by their leave.

VII

What does it all mean, poet? Well,
Your brains beat into rhythm, you tell
What we felt only; you expressed
You hold things beautiful the best,
And pace them in rhyme so, side by side.
'T is something, nay 't is much: but then,
Have you yourself what 's best for men?
Are you — poor, sick, old ere your time —
Nearer one whit your own sublime
Than we who never have turned a rhyme?
Sing, riding 's a joy! For me, I ride.

VIII

And you, great sculptor — so, you gave
A score of years to Art, her slave,
And that 's your Venus, whence we turn
To yonder girl that fords the burn!
You acquiesce, and shall I repine?
What, man of music, you grown gray
With notes and nothing else to say,
Is this your sole praise from a friend,
'Greatly his opera's strains intend,
But in music we know how fashions end!
I gave my youth; but we ride, in fine.

IX

Who knows what 's fit for us? Had fate
Proposed bliss here should sublimate
My being — had I signed the bond —
Still one must lead some life beyond,
Have a bliss to die with, dim-descried.
This foot once planted on the goal,
This glory-garland round my soul,
Could I descry such? Try and test!
I sink back shuddering from the quest.
Earth being so good, would heaven seem best?
Now, heaven and she are beyond this ride.

X

And yet — she has not spoke so long!
What if heaven be that, fair and strong

At life's best, with our eyes upturned
Whither life's flower is first discerned,
We, fixed so, ever should so abide?
What if we still ride on, we two,
With life for ever old yet new,
Changed not in kind but in degree,
The instant made eternity,—
And heaven just prove that I and she
Ride, ride together, for ever ride?

(1855)

MEMORABILIA

I

Ah, did you once see Shelley plain,
And did he stop and speak to you,
And did you speak to him again?
How strange it seems and new!

II

But you were living before that,
And also you are living after;
And the memory I started at—
My starting moves your laughter!

III

I crossed a moor, with a name of its own
And a certain use in the world no doubt,
Yet a hand's-breadth of it shines alone
'Mid the blank miles round about:

IV

For there I picked up on the heather
And there I put inside my breast
A moulted feather, an eagle-feather!
Well, I forget the rest.

(1855)

'DE GUSTIBUS—'

Your ghost will walk, you lover of trees,
(If our loves remain)
In an English lane,
By a cornfield-side a-flutter with poppies.
Hark, those two in the hazel coppice—
A boy and a girl, if the good fates please,
Making love, say,—
The happier they!
Draw yourself up from the light of the moon,
And let them pass, as they will too soon,
With the beanflowers' boon,
And the blackbird's tune,
And May, and June!

What I love best in all the world
Is a castle, precipice-encurled,
In a gash of the wind-grieved Apennine.
Or look for me, old fellow of mine,
(If I get my head from out the mouth
O' the grave, and loose my spirit's bands,
And come again to the land of lands)—
In a sea-side house to the farther South,
Where the baked cicala dies of drouth,
And one sharp tree—'t is a cypress—stands,
By the many hundred years red-rusted,
Rough iron-spiked, ripe fruit-o'ercrusted,
My sentinel to guard the sands
To the water's edge. For, what expands
Before the house, but the great opaque
Blue breadth of sea without a break?
While, in the house, forever crumbles
Some fragment of the frescoed walls,
From blisters where a scorpion sprawls.
A girl bare-footed brings, and tumbles
Down on the pavement, green-flesh melons,
And says there's news to-day—the king
Was shot at, touched in the liver-wing,
Goes with his Bourbon arm in a sling:
—She hopes they have not caught the felons.
Italy, my Italy!
Queen Mary's saying serves for me—
(When fortune's malice
Lost her Calais)—
Open my heart and you will see
Graved inside of it, 'Italy.'
Such lovers old are I and she:
So it always was, so shall ever be!

(1855)

ANDREA DEL SARTO

CALLED 'THE FAULTLESS PAINTER'

But do not let us quarrel any more,
No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once:
Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.
You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?
I 'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,
Treat his own subject after his own way,
Fix his own time, accept too, his own price,
And shut the money into this small hand
When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?
Oh, I 'll content him,—but to-morrow, Love!
I often am much wearier than you think,
This evening more than usual, and it seems
As if—forgive now—should you let me sit

Here by the window with your hand in mine
And look a half-hour forth on Fiesolé,
Both of one mind, as married people use,
Quietly, quietly the evening through,
I might get up to-morrow to my work
Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.
To-morrow, how you shall be glad for this!
Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.
Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve
For each of the five pictures we require:
It saves a model. So! keep looking so —
My serpentining beauty, rounds on rounds!
--How could you ever prick those perfect ears,
Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet —
My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,
Which everybody looks on and calls his,
And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
While she looks — no one's: very dear, no less.
You smile? why, there's my picture ready made,
There's what we painters call our harmony!
A common grayness silvers everything,—
All in a twilight, you and I alike
— You, at the point of your first pride in me
(That's gone you know),— but I, at every point;
My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down
To yonder sober pleasant Fiesolé.
There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;
That length of convent-wall across the way
Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;
The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,
And autumn grows, autumn in everything.
Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape
As if I saw alike my work and self
And all that I was born to be and do,
A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.
How strange now looks the life he makes us lead;
So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!
I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!
This chamber for example — turn your head —
All that's behind us! You don't understand
Nor care to understand about my art,
But you can hear at least when people speak:
And that cartoon, the second from the door
— It is the thing, Love! so such thing should be —
Behold Madonna! — I am bold to say.
I can do with my pencil what I know,
What I see, what at bottom of my heart
I wish for, if I ever wish so deep —
Do easily, too — when I say, perfectly,
I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are judge,
Who listened to the Legate's talk last week,
And just as much they used to say in France.
At any rate, 't is easy, all of it!
No sketches first, no studies, that's long past:
I do what many dream of all their lives,
—Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,
And fail in doing. I could count twenty such
On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,
Who strive — you don't know how the others strive
To paint a little thing like that you smeared
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,—
Yet do much less, so much less, Someone says,
(I know his name, no matter) — so much less!
Well, less is more, Lucrezia: I am judged.
There burns a truer light of God in them,
In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up brain,
Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt
This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.
Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,
Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,
Enter and take their place there sure enough,
Though they come back and cannot tell the world.
My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.
The sudden blood of these men! at a word —
Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils too.
I, painting from myself, and to myself,
Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame
Or their praise either. Somebody remarks
Morello's outline there is wrongly traced,
His hue mistaken; what of that? or else,
Rightly traced and well ordered; what of that?
Speak as they please, what does the mountain care?

Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-gray
Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!
I know both what I want and what might gain,
And yet how profitless to know, to sigh
'Had I been two, another and myself,
Our head would have o'erlooked the world!'
No doubt.
Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth
The Urbinate who died five years ago.
('T is copied, George Vasari sent it me.)
Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,
Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,
Above and through his art — for it gives way;
That arm is wrongly put — and there again —
A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,
He means right — that, a child may understand.
Still, what an arm! and I could alter it:
But all the play, the insight and the stretch —
Out of me, out of me! And wherefore out?
Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,
We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!
Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think —
More than I merit, yes, by many times.
But had you — oh, with the same perfect brow,
And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,
And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare —
Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!
Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged
'God and the glory! never care for gain.
The present by the future, what is that?
Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo!
Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!'
I might have done it for you. So it seems:
Perhaps not. All is as God overrules.
Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;
The rest avail not. Why do I need you?
What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?
In this world, who can do a thing, will not;
And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:
Yet the will's somewhat — somewhat, too, the power —
And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,
God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.
'T is safer for me, if the award be strict,
That I am something underrated here,
Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.
I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,
For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.
The best is when they pass and look aside;
But they speak sometimes; I must bear it all.
Well may they speak! That Francis, that first time,
And that long festal year at Fontainebleau!
I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,
Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,
In that humane great monarch's golden look,—
One finger in his beard or twisted curl
Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile,
One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,
The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,
I painting proudly with his breath on me,
All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,
Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls
Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts,—
And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,
This in the background, waiting on my work,
To crown the issue with a last reward!
A good time, was it not, my kingly days?
And had you not grown restless . . . but I know —
'T is done and past; 't was right, my instinct said;
Too live the life grew, golden and not gray,
And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt
Out of his grange whose four walls make his world.
How could it end in any other way?
You called me, and I came home to your heart.
The triumph was — to reach and stay there; since
I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?
Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold,
You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!

'Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;
The Roman's is the better when you pray,
But still the other's Virgin was his wife'—
Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge
Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows
My better fortune, I resolve to think.
For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,
Said one day Agnolo, his very self,
To Rafael . . . I have known it all these years . . .
(When the young man was flaming out his thoughts
Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,
Too lifted up in heart because of it)
'Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub
Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how,
Who, were he set to plan and execute
As you are, pricked on by your popes and kings,
Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!'
To Rafael's! — And indeed the arm is wrong.
I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see,
Give the chalk here — quick, thus the line should go!
Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!
Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth
(What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?
Do you forget already words like those?),
If really there was such a chance, so lost,—
Is, whether you're — not grateful — but more pleased.
Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!
This hour has been an hour! Another smile?
If you would sit thus by me every night
I should work better, do you comprehend?
I mean that I should earn more, give you more.
See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star;
Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,
The cue-owls speak the name we call them by.
Come from the window, Love,— come in, at last,
Inside the melancholy little house
We built to be so gay with. God is just.
King Francis may forgive me; oft at nights,
When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,
The walls become illumined, brick from brick
Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,
That gold of his I did cement them with!
Let us but love each other. Must you go?
That Cousin here again? he waits outside?
Must see you — you, and not with me? Those loans?
More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?
Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to spend?
While hand and eye and something of a heart
Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth?
I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
The gray remainder of the evening out,
Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly
How I could paint, were I but back in France,
One picture, just one more — the Virgin's face,
Not yours this time! I want you at my side
To hear them — that is, Michel Agnolo — Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.
Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.
I take the subjects for his corridor,
Finish the portrait out of hand — there, there,
And throw him in another thing or two
If he demurs; the whole should prove enough
To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside,
What's better and what's all I care about,
Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff!
Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,
The Cousin! what does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.
I regret little, I would change still less.
Since there my past life lies, why alter it?
The very wrong to Francis! — it is true
I took his coin, was tempted and complied,
And built this house and sinned, and all is said.
My father and my mother died of want.
Well, had I riches of my own? you see
How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.
They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:
And I have labored somewhat in my time
And not been paid profusely. Some good son
Paint my two hundred pictures — let him try!

No doubt, there's something strikes a balance. Yes,
You loved me quite enough, it seems to-night.
This must suffice me here. What would one have?
In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance —
Four great walls in the new Jerusalem,
Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo and me
To cover — the three first without a wife,
While I have mine! So — still they overcome
Because there's still Lucrezia,— as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.

(1855)

THE GUARDIAN-ANGEL

A PICTURE AT FANO

I

Dear and great Angel, wouldst thou only leave
That child, when thou hast done with him, for me!
Let me sit all the day here, that when eve
Shall find performed thy special ministry,
And time come for departure, thou, suspending,
Thy flight, may'st see another child for tending,
Another still, to quiet and retrieve.

II

Then I shall feel thee step one step, no more,
From where thou standest now, to where I gaze,
— And suddenly my head is covered o'er
With those wings, white above the child who prays
Now on that tomb — and I shall feel thee guarding
Me, out of all the world; for me, discarding
Yon heaven thy home, that waits and opes its door.

III

I would not look up thither past thy head
Because the door opes, like that child, I know,
For I should have thy gracious face instead,
Thou bird of God! And wilt thou bend me low
Like him, and lay, like his, my hands together,
And lift them up to pray, and gently tether
Me, as thy lamb there, with thy garment's spread?

IV

If this was ever granted, I would rest
My head beneath thine, while thy healing hands
Close-covered both my eyes beside thy breast,
Pressing the brain, which too much thought expands,
Back to its proper size again, and smoothing
Distortion down till every nerve had soothing,
And all lay quiet, happy and suppressed.

V

How soon all worldly wrong would be repaired!
I think how I should view the earth and skies
And sea, when once again my brow was bared
After thy healing, with such different eyes.
O world, as God has made it! All is beauty:
And knowing this, is love, and love is duty.
What further may be sought for or declared?

VI

Guercino drew this angel I saw teach
(Alfred, dear friend!) — that little child to pray,
Holding the little hands up, each to each
Pressed gently,— with his own head turned away
Over the earth where so much lay before him
Of work to do, though heaven was opening o'er him,
And he was left at Fano by the beach.

VII

We were at Fano, and three times we went
To sit and see him in his chapel there,
And drink his beauty to our soul's content
— My angel with me too: and since I care
For dear Guercino's fame (to which in power
And glory comes this picture for a dower,
Fraught with a pathos so magnificent) —

VIII

And since he did not work thus earnestly
At all times, and has else endured some wrong —
I took one thought his picture struck from me,
And spread it out, translating it to song.
My love is here. Where are you, dear old friend?
How rolls the Wairoa at your world's far end?
This is Ancona, yonder is the sea.

(1855)

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL

SHORTLY AFTER THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING IN EUROPE

Let us begin and carry up this corpse,
Singing together.
Leave we the common crofts, the vulgar thorpes
Each in its tether
Sleeping safe on the bosom of the plain,
Cared-for till cock-crow:
Look out if yonder be not day again
Rimming the rock-row!
That 's the appropriate country; there, man's thought,
Rarer, intenser,
Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it ought,
Chafes in the censer.
Leave we the unlettered plain its herd and crop;
Seek we sepulture
On a tall mountain, citied to the top,
Crowded with culture!
All the peaks soar, but one the rest excels;
Clouds overcome it;
No! yonder sparkle is the citadel's
Circling its summit.
Thither our path lies; wind we up the heights:
Wait ye the warning?
Our low life was the level's and the night's;
He 's for the morning.
Step to a tune, square chests, erect each head,
'Ware the beholders!
This is our master, famous calm and dead,
Borne on our shoulders.

Sleep, crop and herd! sleep, darkling thorpe and croft,
Safe from the weather!
He, whom we convoy to his grave aloft,
Singing together,
He was a man born with thy face and throat,
Lyric Apollo!
Long he lived nameless: how should spring take note
Winter would follow?
Till lo, the little touch, and youth was gone!
Cramped and diminished,
Moaned he, 'New measures, other feet anon!
My dance is finished?'
No, that 's the world's way: (keep the mountain-side,
Make for the city!)
He knew the signal, and stepped on with pride
Over men's pity;
Left play for work, and grappled with the world
Bent on escaping:
'What 's in the scroll,' quoth he, 'thou keepest furled?
Show me their shaping,
Theirs who most studied man, the bard and sage,—
Give!'— So, he gowned him,
Straight got by heart that book to its last page:
Learnèd, we found him.
Yea, but we found him bald too, eyes like lead,
Accents uncertain:
'Time to taste life,' another would have said,
'Up with the curtain!'
This man said rather, 'Actual life comes next?
Patience a moment!
Grant I have mastered learning's crabbed text,
Still there 's the comment.
Let me know all! Prate not of most or least,
Painful or easy!
Even to the crumbs I 'd fain eat up the feast,
Ay, nor feel queasy.'
Oh, such a life as he resolved to live,
When he had learned it,
When he had gathered all books had to give!
Sooner, he spurned it.
Image the whole, then execute the parts —
Fancy the fabric
Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike fire from quartz,
Ere mortar dab brick.

(Here 's the town-gate reached; there 's the market-place
Gaping before us.)
Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace
(Hearten our chorus!)
That before living he 'd learn how to live — No end to learning.
Earn the means first — God surely will contrive
Use for our earning.
Others mistrust and say, 'But time escapes: Live now or never!'
He said, 'What 's time? Leave Now for dogs and apes!
Man has Forever!'
Back to his book then: deeper drooped his head;
Calculus racked him:
Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of lead: *Tussis* attacked him.
'Now, master, take a little rest!' — not he! (Caution redoubled,
Step two abreast, the way winds narrowly!)
Not a whit troubled,
Back to his studies, fresher than at first,
Fierce as a dragon
He (soul-hydroptic with a sacred thirst)
Sucked at the flagon.
Oh, if we draw a circle premature,
Heedless of far gain,
Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure
Bad is our bargain!
Was it not great? did not he throw on God
(He loves the burthen) —
God's task to make the heavenly period
Perfect the earthen,
Did not he magnify the mind, show clear
Just what it all meant?
He would not discount life, as fools do here,
Paid by instalment.
He ventured neck or nothing — heaven's success
Found, or earth's failure:
'Wilt thou trust death or not?' He answered 'Yes:
Hence with life's pale lure!'
That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it;
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Dies ere he knows it.
That low man goes on adding one to one,
His hundred 's soon hit;
This high man, aiming at a million,
Misses an unit.
That, has the world here — should he need the next,
Let the world mind him!
This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed
Seeking shall find Him.
So, with the throttling hands of death at strife,
Ground he at grammar;
Still, through the rattle, parts of speech were rife:
While he could stammer
He settled *Hoti's* business — let it be! — Properly based *Oun* —
Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*,
Dead from the waist down.
Well, here 's the platform, here 's the proper place:
Hail to your purlieus,
All ye highfliers of the feathered race,
Swallows and curlews!
Here 's the top-peak, the multitude below
Live, for they can, there:
This man decided not to Live but Know —
Bury this man there?
Here — here 's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form,
Lightnings are loosened,
Stars come and go! Let joy break with the storm,
Peace let the dew send!
Lofty designs must close in like effects:
Loftily lying,
Leave him — still loftier than the world suspects,
Living and dying.

(1855)

ONE WORD MORE

TO E. B. B.

I

There they are, my fifty men and women
Naming me the fifty poems finished!
Take them, Love, the book and me together:
Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also.

II

Rafael made a century of sonnets,
Made and wrote them in a certain volume
Dinted with the silver-pointed pencil
Else he only used to draw Madonnas:
These, the world might view — but one, the volume.
Who that one, you ask? Your heart instructs you.

Did she live and love it all her lifetime?
Did she drop, his lady of the sonnets,
Die, and let it drop beside her pillow
Where it lay in place of Rafael's glory,
Rafael's cheek so duteous and so loving —
Cheek, the world was wont to hail a painter's,
Rafael's cheek, her love had turned a poet's?

III

You and I would rather read that volume
(Taken to his beating bosom by it)
Lean and list the bosom-beats of Rafael,
Would we not? than wonder at Madonnas —
Her, San Sisto names, and Her, Foligno,
Her, that visits Florence in a vision,
Her, that 's left with lilies in the Louvre —
Seen by us and all the world in circle.

IV

You and I will never read that volume.
Guido Reni, like his own eye's apple,
Guarded long the treasure-book and loved it.
Guido Reni dying, all Bologna
Cried, and the world cried too, 'Ours, the treasure!'
Suddenly, as rare things will, it vanished.

V

Dante once prepared to paint an angel:
Whom to please? You whisper 'Beatrice.'
While he mused and traced it and retraced it
(Peradventure with a pen corroded
Still by drops of that hot ink he dipped for,
When, his left-hand i' the hair o' the wicked,
Back he held the brow and pricked its stigma,
Bit into the live man's flesh for parchment,
Loosed him, laughed to see the writing rankle,
Let the wretch go festering through Florence) —
Dante, who loved well because he hated,
Hated wickedness that hinders loving,
Dante, standing, studying his angel —
In there broke the folk of his Inferno.
Says he — 'Certain people of importance'
(Such he gave his daily dreadful line to)
'Entered and would seize, forsooth, the poet.'
Says the poet — 'Then I stopped my painting.'

VI

You and I would rather see that angel,
Painted by the tenderness of Dante,
Would we not? — than read a fresh Inferno

VII

You and I will never see that picture.
While he mused on love and Beatrice,
While he softened o'er his outlined angel,
In they broke, those 'people of importance':
We and Bice bear the loss forever.

VIII

What of Rafael's sonnets, Dante's picture?
This: no artist lives and loves, that longs not
Once, and only once, and for one only
(Ah, the prize!), to find his love a language
Fit and fair and simple and sufficient —
Using nature that 's an art to others,
Not, this one time, art that 's turned his nature.
Ay, of all the artists living, loving,
None but would forego his proper dowry,
Does he paint? he fain would write a poem,
Does he write? he fain would paint a picture,—
Put to proof art alien to the artist's,
Once, and only once, and for one only,
So to be the man and leave the artist,
Gain the man's joy, miss the artist's sorrow.

IX

Wherefore? Heaven's gift takes earth's abatement!
He who smites the rock and spreads the water,
Bidding drink and live a crowd beneath him,
Even he, the minute makes immortal,
Proves, perchance, but mortal in the minute,
Desecrates, belike, the deed in doing.
While he smites, how can he but remember,
So he smote before, in such a peril,
When they stood and mocked — 'Shall smiting help us?'
When they drank and sneered — 'A stroke is easy!'
When they wiped their mouths and went their journey,
Throwing him for thanks — 'But drought was pleasant.'
Thus old memories mar the actual triumph;
Thus the doing savors of disrelish;

Thus achievement lacks a gracious somewhat;
O'er-importuned brows becloud the mandate,
Carelessness or consciousness — the gesture,
For he bears an ancient wrong about him,
Sees and knows again those phalanxed faces,
Hears, yet one time more, the 'customed prelude —
'How shouldst thou, of all men, smite, and save us?'
Guesses what is like to prove the sequel —
'Egypt's flesh-pots — nay, the drought was better.'

X

Oh, the crowd must have emphatic warrant!
Theirs, the Sinai-forehead's cloven brilliance,
Right-arm's rod-sweep, tongue's imperial fiat.
Never dares the man put off the prophet.

XI

Did he love one face from out the thousands
(Were she Jethro's daughter, white and wifely,
Were she but the Æthiopian bondslave)
He would envy yon dumb, patient camel,
Keeping a reserve of scanty water
Meant to save his own life in the desert,
Ready in the desert to deliver
(Kneeling down to let his breast be opened)
Hoard and life together for his mistress.

XII

I shall never, in the years remaining,
Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues,
Make you music that should all-express me;
So it seems: I stand on my attainment,
This of verse alone, one life allows me;
Verse and nothing else have I to give you,
Other heights in other lives, God willing:
All the gifts from all the heights, your own, Love!

XIII

Yet a semblance of resource avails us —
Shade so finely touched, love's sense must seize it.
Take these lines, look lovingly and nearly,
Lines I write the first time and the last time.
He who works in fresco, steals a hair-brush,
Curbs the liberal hand, subservient proudly,
Cramps his spirit, crowds its all in little,
Makes a strange art of an art familiar,
Fills his lady's missal-marge with flowerets.
He who blows through bronze may breathe through silver,
Fitly serenade a slumbrous princess.
He who writes, may write for once as I do.

XIV

Love, you saw me gather men and women,
Live or dead or fashioned by my fancy,
Enter each and all, and use their service,
Speak from every mouth,— the speech, a poem.
Hardly shall I tell my joys and sorrows,
Hopes and fears, belief and disbelieving:
I am mine and yours — the rest be all men's,
Karshish, Cleon, Norbert, and the fifty.
Let me speak this once in my true person,
Not as Lippo, Roland, or Andrea,
Though the fruit of speech be just this sentence:
Pray you, look on these my men and women,
Take and keep my fifty poems finished;
Where my heart lies, let my brain lie also!
Poor the speech; be how I speak, for all things.

XV

Not but that you know me! Lo, the moon's self!
Here in London, yonder late in Florence,
Still we find her face, the thrice-transfigured.
Curving on a sky imbrued with color,
Drifted over Fiesolé by twilight,
Came she, our new crescent of a hair's-breadth.
Full she flared it, lamping Samminiato,
Rounder 'twixt the cypresses and rounder,
Perfect till the nightingales applauded.
Now, a piece of her old self, impoverished,
Hard to greet, she traverses the house-roofs,
Hurries with unhandsome thrift of silver,
Goes dispiritedly, glad to finish.

XVI

What, there's nothing in the moon noteworthy?
Nay: for if that moon could love a mortal,
Use, to charm him (so to fit a fancy),
All her magic ('t is the old sweet mythos),
She would turn a new side to her mortal,
Side unseen of herdsman, huntsman, steersman —
Blank to Zoroaster on his terrace,
Blind to Galileo on his turret,
Dumb to Homer, dumb to Keats — him, even!

Think, the wonder of the moonstruck mortal —
When she turns round, comes again in heaven,
Opens out anew for worse or better!
Proves she like some portent of an iceberg
Swimming full upon the ship it founders,
Hungry with huge teeth of splintered crystals?
Proves she as the paved work of a sapphire,
Seen by Moses when he climbed the mountain?
Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu
Climbed and saw the very God, the Highest,
Stand upon the paved work of a sapphire.
Like the bodied heaven in his clearness
Shone the stone, the sapphire of that paved work,
When they ate and drank and saw God also!

XVII

What were seen? None knows, none ever shall know.
Only this is sure — the sight were other,
Not the moon's same side, born late in Florence,
Dying now impoverished here in London.
God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures
Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with,
One to show a woman when he loves her!

XVIII

This I say of me, but think of you, Love!
This to you — yourself my moon of poets!
Ah, but that 's the world's side, there 's the wonder,
Thus they see you, praise you, think they know you!
There, in turn I stand with them and praise you —
Out of my own self, I dare to phrase it.
But the best is when I glide from out them,
Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,
Come out on the other side, the novel
Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,
Where I hush and bless myself with silence.

XIX

Oh, their Rafael of the dear Madonnas,
Oh, their Dante of the dread Inferno,
Wrote one song — and in my brain I sing it,
Drew one angel — borne, see, on my bosom!

R. B. (1855)

ABT VOGLER

AFTER HE HAS BEEN EXTEMPORIZING UPON THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENT OF HIS INVENTION

I

Would that the structure brave, the manifold music I build,
Bidding my organ obey, calling its keys to their work,
Claiming each slave of the sound, at a touch, as when Solomon willed
Armies of angels that soar, legions of demons that lurk,
Man, brute, reptile, fly,— alien of end and of aim,
Adverse, each from the other heaven-high, hell-deep removed,—
Should rush into sight at once as he named the ineffable Name,
And pile him a palace straight, to pleasure the princess he loved!

II

Would it might tarry like his, the beautiful building of mine,
This which my keys in a crowd pressed and importuned to raise!
Ah, one and all, how they helped, would dispart now and now combine,
Zealous to hasten the work, heighten their master his praise!
And one would bury his brow with a blind plunge down to hell,
Burrow awhile and build, broad on the roots of things,
Then up again swim into sight, having based me my palace well,
Founded it, fearless of flame, flat on the nether springs.

III

And another would mount and march, like the excellent minion he was,
Ay, another and yet another, one crowd but with many a crest,
Raising my rampired walls of gold as transparent as glass,
Eager to do and die, yield each his place to the rest:
For higher still and higher (as a runner tips with fire,
When a great illumination surprises a festal night —
Outlining round and round Rome's dome from space to spire)

Up, the pinnacled glory reached, and the pride of my soul was in sight.

IV

In sight? Not half! for it seemed, it was certain, to match man's birth,
Nature in turn conceived, obeying an impulse as I;
And the emulous heaven yearned down, made effort to reach the earth,
As the earth had done her best, in my passion, to scale the sky:
Novel splendors burst forth, grew familiar and dwelt with mine,
Not a point nor peak but found and fixed its wandering star;
Meteor-moons, balls of blaze: and they did not pale nor pine,
For earth had attained to heaven, there was no more near nor far.

V

Nay more; for there wanted not who walked in the glare and glow,
Presences plain in the place; or, fresh from the Protoplast,
Furnished for ages to come, when a kindlier wind should blow,
Lured now to begin and live, in a house to their liking at last;
Or else the wonderful Dead who have passed through the body and gone,
But were back once more to breathe in an old world worth their new:
What never had been, was now; what was, as it shall be anon;
And what is,— shall I say, matched both? for I was made perfect too.

VI

All through my keys that gave their sounds to a wish of my soul,
All through my soul that praised as its wish flowed visibly forth,
All through music and me! For think, had I painted the whole,
Why, there it had stood, to see, nor the process so wonder-worth:
Had I written the same, made verse — still, effect proceeds from cause,
Ye know why the forms are fair, ye hear how the tale is told;
It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to laws.
Painter and poet are proud in the artist-list enrolled: —

VII

But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that can,
Existent behind all laws, that made them and, lo, they are!
And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man
That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but a star.
Consider it well: each tone of our scale in itself is naught:
It is everywhere in the world — loud, soft, and all is said:
Give it to me to use! I mix it with two in my thought:
And there! Ye have heard and seen: consider and bow the head!

VIII

Well, it is gone at last, the palace of music I reared;
Gone! and the good tears start, the praises that come too slow;
For one is assured at first, one scarce can say that he feared,
That he even gave it a thought, the gone thing was to go.
Never to be again! But many more of the kind
As good, nay, better perchance: is this your comfort to me?
To me, who must be saved because I cling with my mind
To the same, same self, same love, same God: ay, what was, shall be.

IX

Therefore to whom turn I but to thee, the ineffable Name?
Builder and maker, thou, of houses not made with hands!
What, have fear of change from thee who art ever the same?
Doubt that thy power can fill the heart that thy power expands?
There shall never be one lost good! What was, shall live as before;
The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound;
What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more;
On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven a perfect round.

X

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist;

Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.
The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that he heard it once: we shall hear it by and by.

XI

And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
For the fullness of the days? Have we withered or agonized?
Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing might issue thence?
Why rushed the discords in, but that harmony should be prized?
Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear,
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal and woe:
But God has a few of us whom he whispers in the ear;
The rest may reason and welcome: 't is we musicians know.

XII

Well, it is earth with me; silence resumes her reign:
I will be patient and proud, and soberly acquiesce.
Give me the keys. I feel for the common chord again,
Sliding by semitones till I sink to the minor,— yes,
And I blunt it into a ninth, and I stand on alien ground,
Surveying awhile the heights I rolled from into the deep;
Which, hark, I have dared and done, for my resting-place is found,
The C Major of this life: so, now I will try to sleep.

(1864)

RABBI BEN EZRA

I

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand
Who saith, 'A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!'

II

Not that, amassing flowers,
Youth sighed, 'Which rose make ours,
Which lily leave and then as best recall?'
Not that, admiring stars,
It yearned, 'Nor Jove, nor Mars;
Mine be some figured flame which blends, transcends them all!'

III

Not for such hopes and fears
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate: folly wide the mark!
Rather I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.

IV

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast;
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men;
Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed beast?

V

Rejoice we are allied
To That which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of his tribes that take, I must believe.

VI

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

VII

For thence,— a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks,—

Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me:
A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the scale.

VIII

What is he but a brute
Whose flesh has soul to suit,
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play?
To man, propose this test —
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?

IX

Yet gifts should prove their use:
I own the Past profuse
Of power each side, perfection every turn:
Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole;
Should not the heart beat once 'How good to live and learn'?

X

Not once beat 'Praise be thine!
I see the whole design,
I, who saw power, see now love perfect too:
Perfect I call thy plan:
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete,— I trust what thou shalt do!'

XI

For pleasant is this flesh;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest:
Would we some prize might hold
To match those manifold
Possessions of the brute,— gain most, as we did best!

XII

Let us not always say,
'Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!'
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry, 'All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!'

XIII

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its term:
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a God though in the germ.

XIV

And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone
Once more on my adventure brave and new:
Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armor to indue.

XV

Youth ended, I shall try
My gain or loss thereby;
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold:
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame:
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being old.

XVI

For, note when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from the gray:
A whisper from the west
Shoots — 'Add this to the rest,
Take it and try its worth: here dies another day.'

XVII

So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife,
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,
'This rage was right i' the main,
That acquiescence vain:
The Future I may face now I have proved the Past.'

XVIII

For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act to-morrow what he learns to-day:
Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

XIX

As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth,

Toward making, than repose on aught found made:
So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedst age: wait death nor be afraid!

XX

Enough now, if the Right
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine own,
With knowledge absolute,
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone.

XXI

Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from small,
Announced to each his station in the Past!
Was I, the world arraigned,
Were they, my soul disdained,
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace at last!

XXII

Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;
Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me: we all surmise,
They, this thing, and I, that: whom shall my soul believe?

XXIII

Not on the vulgar mass
Called 'work,' must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

XXIV

But all, the world's coarse thumb,
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount:

XXV

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

XXVI

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,
That metaphor! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay,—
Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round,
'Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize to-day!'

XXVII

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure.

XXVIII

He fixed thee mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

XXIX

What though the earlier grooves
Which ran the laughing loves
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though about thy rim,
Skull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

XXX

Look not thou down but up!
To uses of a cup!
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,

The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips a-glow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what need'st thou with earth's wheel?

XXXI

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who moldest men;
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I — to the wheel of life
With shapes and colors rife,
Bound dizzily,— mistake my end, to slake thy thirst:

XXXII

So, take and use thy work,
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!
My times be in thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same!

(1864)

PROSPICE

Fear death? to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle 's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so — one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute 's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

(1864)

HERVÉ RIEL

On the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hundred ninety-two,
Did the English fight the French,— woe to France!
And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter through the blue,
Like a crowd of frightened porpoises a shoal of sharks pursue,
Came crowding ship on ship to Saint Malo on the Rance,
With the English fleet in view.

II

'T was the squadron that escaped, with the victor in full chase;
First and foremost of the drove, in his great ship, Damfreville;
Close on him fled, great and small,
Twenty-two good ships in all;
And they signaled to the place
'Help the winners of a race!
Get us guidance, give us harbor, take us quick — or, quicker still,
Here 's the English can and will!'

III

Then the pilots of the place put out brisk and leapt on board;
'Why, what hope or chance have ships like these to pass?' laughed they:
'Rocks to starboard, rocks to port, all the passage scarred and scored,
Shall the "Formidable" here with her twelve and eighty guns
Think to make the river-mouth by the single narrow way,
Trust to enter where 't is ticklish for a craft of twenty tons,

And with flow at full beside?
Now, 't is slackest ebb of tide.
Reach the mooring? Rather say,
While rock stands or water runs,
Not a ship will leave the bay!'

IV

Then was called a council straight.
Brief and bitter the debate:
'Here 's the English at our heels; would you have them take in tow
All that 's left us of the fleet, linked together stern and bow,
For a prize to Plymouth Sound?
Better run the ships aground!'
(Ended Damfreville his speech).
'Not a minute more to wait!
Let the Captains all and each
Shove ashore, then blow up, burn the vessels on the beach!
France must undergo her fate.

V

'Give the word!' But no such word
Was ever spoke or heard;
For up stood, for out stepped, for in struck amid all these
—A Captain? A Lieutenant? A Mate—first, second, third?
No such man of mark, and meet
With his betters to compete!
But a simple Breton sailor pressed by Tourville for the fleet,
A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel the Croisickese.

VI

And 'What mockery or malice have we here?' cried Hervé Riel:
'Are you mad, you Malouins? Are you cowards, fools, or rogues?
Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who took the soundings, tell
On my fingers every bank, every shallow, every swell
'Twixt the offing here and Grève where the river disembogues?
Are you bought by English gold? Is it love the lying 's for?
Morn and eve, night and day,
Have I piloted your bay,
Entered free and anchored fast at the foot of Solidor.
Burn the fleet and ruin France? That were worse than fifty Hogues!
Sirs, they know I speak the truth! Sirs, believe me there 's a way!
Only let me lead the line,
Have the biggest ship to steer,
Get this "Formidable" clear,
Make the others follow mine,
And I lead them, most and least, by a passage I know well,
Right to Solidor past Grève,
And there lay them safe and sound;
And if one ship misbehave,
—Keel so much as grate the ground,
Why, I 've nothing but my life,—here 's my head!' cries Hervé Riel.

VII

Not a minute more to wait.
'Steer us in, then, small and great!
Take the helm, lead the line, save the squadron!' cried its chief.
Captains, give the sailor place!
He is Admiral, in brief.
Still the north-wind, by God's grace!
See the noble fellow's face
As the big ship, with a bound,
Clears the entry like a hound,
Keeps the passage as its inch of way were the wide sea's profound!
See, safe through shoal and rock,
How they follow in a flock,
Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that grates the ground,
Not a spar that comes to grief!
The peril, see, is past,
All are harbored to the last,
And just as Hervé Riel hollas 'Anchor!'—sure as fate,
Up the English come—too late!

VIII

So, the storm subsides to calm:
They see the green trees wave
On the heights o'erlooking Grève.
Hearts that bled are stanched with balm.
'Just our rapture to enhance,
Let the English rake the bay,
Gnash their teeth and glare askance
As they cannonade away!
'Neath rampired Solidor pleasant riding on the Rance!'
How hope succeeds despair on each Captain's countenance!
Out burst all with one accord,
'This is Paradise for Hell!
Let France, let France's King
Thank the man that did the thing!
What a shout, and all one word,
'Hervé Riel!'

As he stepped in front once more,
  Not a symptom of surprise
  In the frank blue Breton eyes,
Just the same man as before.

IX

Then said Damfreville, 'My friend,
I must speak out at the end,
  Though I find the speaking hard.
Praise is deeper than the lips:
You have saved the King his ships,
  You must name your own reward.
'Faith, our sun was near eclipse!
Demand whate'er you will,
France remains your debtor still.
Ask to heart's content and have! or my
    name's not Damfreville.'

X

Then a beam of fun outbroke
On the bearded mouth that spoke,
As the honest heart laughed through
Those frank eyes of Breton blue:
'Since I needs must say my say,
  Since on board the duty's done,
  And from Malo Roads to Croisic Point,
    what is it but a run?—
Since 't is ask and have, I may—
  Since the others go ashore—
Come! A good whole holiday!
  Leave to go and see my wife, whom I call
    the Belle Aurore!'
That he asked and that he got,—nothing
    more.

XI

Name and deed alike are lost:
Not a pillar nor a post
  In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it
    befell:
Not a head in white and black
On a single fishing-smack,
In memory of the man but for whom had
    gone to wrack
  All that France saved from the fight
    whence England bore the bell.
Go to Paris: rank on rank
  Search the heroes flung pell-mell
On the Louvre, face and flank!
  You shall look long enough ere you come
    to Hervé Riel.
So, for better and for worse,
Hervé Riel, accept my verse!
In my verse, Hervé Riel, do thou once more
Save the squadron, honor France, love thy
    wife the Belle Aurore!

(1871)

THE TWO POETS OF CROISIC

PROLOGUE

Such a starved bank of moss
  Till, that May-morn,
Blue ran the flash across:
  Violets were born!

Sky—what a scowl of cloud
  Till, near and far,
Ray on ray split the shroud:
  Splendid, a star!

World—how it walled about
  Life with disgrace
Till God's own smile came out:
  That was thy face!

EPILOGUE

I

What a pretty tale you told me
  Once upon a time
—Said you found it somewhere (scold me!)
  Was it prose or was it rhyme,
Greek or Latin? Greek, you said,
While your shoulder propped my head.

II

Anyhow there 's no forgetting
  This much if no more,
That a poet (pray, no petting!)
  Yes, a bard, sir, famed of yore,
Went where suchlike used to go,
Singing for a prize, you know.

III

Well, he had to sing, not merely
  Sing but play the lyre;
Playing was important clearly
  Quite as singing: I desire,
Sir, you keep the fact in mind
For a purpose that 's behind.

IV

There stood he, while deep attention
  Held the judges round,
—Judges able, I should mention,
  To detect the slightest sound
Sung or played amiss: such ears
Had old judges, it appears!

V

None the less he sang out boldly,
  Played in time and tune,

Till the judges, weighing coldly
Each note's worth, seemed, late or soon,
Sure to smile 'In vain one tries
Picking faults out: take the prize!'

VI

When, a mischief! Were they seven
Strings the lyre possessed?
Oh, and afterwards eleven,
Thank you! Well, sir,— who had guessed
Such ill luck in store?— it happed
One of those same seven strings snapped.

VII

All was lost, then! No! a cricket
(What 'cicada?' Pooh!)
— Some mad thing that left its thicket
For mere love of music — flew
With its little heart on fire,
Lighted on the crippled lyre.

VIII

So that when (Ah, joy!) our singer
For his truant string
Feels with disconcerted finger,
What does cricket else but fling
Fiery heart forth, sound the note
Wanted by the throbbing throat?

IX

Ay, and ever to the ending,
Cricket chirps at need,
Executes the hand's intending,
Promptly, perfectly,— indeed
Saves the singer from defeat
With her chirrup low and sweet.

X

Till, at ending, all the judges
Cry with one assent,
'Take the prize — a prize who grudges
Such a voice and instrument?
Why, we took your lyre for harp,
So it thrilled us forth F sharp!'

XI

Did the conqueror spurn the creature,
Once its service done?
That's no such uncommon feature
In the case when Music's son
Finds his Lotte's power too spent
For aiding soul-development.

XII

No! This other on returning
Homeward, prize in hand,
Satisfied his bosom's yearning:
(Sir, I hope you understand!)
— Said 'Some record there must be
Of this cricket's help to me!'

XIII

So, he made himself a statue:
Marble stood, life-size;
On the lyre, he pointed at you,
Perched his partner in the prize;
Never more apart you found
Her, he throned, from him, she crowned.

XIV

That's the tale: its application?
Somebody I know
Hopes one day for reputation
Through his poetry that's — Oh,
All so learned and so wise
And deserving of a prize!

XV

If he gains one, will some ticket,
When his statue's built,
Tell the gazer ''T was a cricket
Helped my crippled lyre, whose lilt
Sweet and low, when strength usurped
Softness' place i' the scale, she chirped?

XVI

'For as victory was nighest,
While I sang and played,—
With my lyre at lowest, highest,
Right alike,— one string that made
"Love" sound soft was snapt in twain,
Never to be heard again,—

XVII

'Had not a kind cricket fluttered,
Perched upon the place
Vacant left, and duly uttered
"Love, Love, Love," whene'er the bass
Asked the treble to atone
For its somewhat somber drone.'

XVIII

But you don't know music! Wherefore
Keep on casting pearls
To a — poet? All I care for
Is — to tell him that a girl's
'Love' comes aptly in when gruff
Grows his singing. (There, enough!)

(1878)

PHEIDIPPIDES

χαίρετε, νικῶμεν.

First I salute this soil of the blessed, river and rock!
Gods of my birthplace, dæmons and heroes, honor to all!
Then I name thee, claim thee for our patron, co-equal in praise
— Ay, with Zeus the Defender, with Her of the ægis and spear!
Also, ye of the bow and the buskin, praised be your peer,
Now, henceforth and for ever,— O latest to whom I upraise
Hand and heart and voice! For Athens, leave pasture and flock!
Present to help, potent to save, Pan — patron I call!

Archons of Athens, topped by the tettix, see, I return!
See, 't is myself here standing alive, no specter that speaks!
Crowned with the myrtle, did you command me, Athens and you,
'Run, Pheidippides, run and race, reach Sparta for aid!
Persia has come, we are here, where is She?' Your command I obeyed,
Ran and raced: like stubble, some field which a fire runs through,
Was the space between city and city: two days, two nights did I burn
Over the hills, under the dales, down pits and up peaks.

Into their midst I broke: breath served but for 'Persia has come.
Persia bids Athens proffer slaves'-tribute, water and earth;
Razed to the ground is Eretria — but Athens, shall Athens sink,
Drop into dust and die — the flower of Hellas utterly die,
Die with the wide world spitting at Sparta, the stupid, the stander-by?
Answer me quick, what help, what hand do you stretch o'er destruction's brink?
How,— when? No care for my limbs! — there 's lightning in all and some —
Fresh and fit your message to bear, once lips give it birth!'

O my Athens — Sparta love thee? Did Sparta respond?
Every face of her leered in a furrow of envy, mistrust,
Malice,— each eye of her gave me its glitter of gratified hate!
Gravely they turned to take counsel, to cast for excuses. I stood
Quivering,— the limbs of me fretting as fire frets, an inch from dry wood:
'Persia has come, Athens asks aid, and still they debate?
Thunder, thou Zeus! Athene, are Spartans a quarry beyond
Swing of thy spear? Phoibos and Artemis, clang them "Ye must"!'

No bolt launched from Olumpos! Lo, their answer at last!
'Has Persia come,— does Athens ask aid,— may Sparta befriend?
Nowise precipitate judgment — too weighty the issue at stake!
Count we no time lost time which lags through respect to the gods!
Ponder that precept of old, 'No warfare, whatever the odds
In your favor, so long as the moon, half-orbed, is unable to take
Full-circle her state in the sky!' Already she rounds to it fast:
Athens must wait, patient as we — who judgment suspend.'

Athens,— except for that sparkle,— thy name, I had moldered to ash!
That sent a blaze through my blood; off, off and away was I back,
— Not one word to waste, one look to lose on the false and the vile!
Yet 'O gods of my land!' I cried, as each hillock and plain,
Wood and stream, I knew, I named, rushing past them again,
'Have ye kept faith, proved mindful of honors we paid you erewhile?
Vain was the filleted victim, the fulsome libation! Too rash
Love in its choice, paid you so largely service so slack!

'Oak and olive and bay,— I bid you cease to enwreathe
Brows made bold by your leaf! Fade at the Persian's foot,
You that, our patrons were pledged, should never adorn a slave!

Rather I hail thee, Parnes,—trust to thy wild waste tract!
Treeless, herbless, lifeless mountain! What matter if slacked
My speed may hardly be, for homage to crag and to cave
No deity deigns to drape with verdure?—at least I can breathe,
Fear in thee no fraud from the blind, no lie from the mute!'

Such my cry as, rapid, I ran over Parnes' ridge;
Gully and gap I clambered and cleared till, sudden, a bar
Jutted, a stoppage of stone against me, blocking the way.
Right! for I minded the hollow to traverse, the fissure across:
'Where I could enter, there I depart by! Night in the fosse?
Athens to aid? Though the dive were through Erebos, thus I obey—
Out of the day dive, into the day as bravely arise! No bridge
Better!'—when—ha! what was it I came on, of wonders that are?

There, in the cool of a cleft, sat he—majestical Pan!
Ivy drooped wanton, kissed his head, moss cushioned his hoof:
All the great god was good in the eyes grave-kindly—the curl
Carved on the bearded cheek, amused at a mortal's awe
As, under the human trunk, the goat-thighs grand I saw.
'Halt, Pheidippides!'—halt I did, my brain of a whirl:
'Hither to me! Why pale in my presence?' he gracious began:
'How is it,—Athens, only in Hellas, holds me aloof?

'Athens, she only, rears me no fane, makes me no feast!
Wherefore? Than I what godship to Athens more helpful of old?
Ay, and still, and forever her friend! Test Pan, trust me!
Go, bid Athens take heart, laugh Persia to scorn, have faith
In the temples and tombs! Go, say to Athens, "The Goat-God saith:
When Persia—so much as strews not the soil—is cast in the sea,
Then praise Pan who fought in the ranks with your most and least,
Goat-thigh to greaved-thigh, made one cause with the free and the bold!"

'Say Pan saith: "Let this, foreshowing the place, be the pledge!"'
(Gay, the liberal hand held out this herbage I bear
—Fennel,—I grasped it a-tremble with dew—whatever it bode)
'While, as for thee . . .' But enough! He was gone. If I ran hitherto—
Be sure that the rest of my journey, I ran no longer, but flew.
Parnes to Athens—earth no more, the air was my road:
Here am I back. Praise Pan, we stand no more on the razor's edge!
Pan for Athens, Pan for me! I too have a guerdon rare!

Then spoke Miltiades. 'And thee, best runner of Greece,
Whose limbs did duty indeed,—what gift is promised thyself?
Tell it us straightway,—Athens the mother demands of her son!'
Rosily blushed the youth: he paused; but, lifting at length
His eyes from the ground, it seemed as he gathered the rest of his strength
Into the utterance—'Pan spoke thus: "For what thou hast done
Count on a worthy reward! Henceforth be allowed thee release
From the racer's toil, no vulgar reward in praise or in pelf!"

'I am bold to believe, Pan means reward the most to my mind!
Fight I shall, with our foremost, wherever this fennel may grow,—
Pound—Pan helping us—Persia to dust, and, under the deep,
Whelm her away forever; and then,—no Athens to save,—
Marry a certain maid, I know keeps faith to the brave,—
Hie to my house and home: and, when my children shall creep
Close to my knees,—recount how the God was awful yet kind,

Promised their sire reward to the full — rewarding him — so!'

Unforeseeing one! Yes, he fought on the Marathon day:
So, when Persia was dust, all cried 'To Akropolis!
Run, Pheidippides, one race more! the meed is thy due!
"Athens is saved, thank Pan," go shout!' He flung down his shield,
Ran like fire once more: and the space 'twixt the Fennelfield
And Athens was stubble again, a field which a fire runs through,
Till in he broke: 'Rejoice, we conquer!' Like wine through clay,
Joy in his blood bursting his heart, he died — the bliss!
So, to this day, when friend meets friend, the word of salute
Is still 'Rejoice'— his word which brought rejoicing indeed.
So is Pheidippides happy forever,— the noble strong man
Who could race like a god, bear the face of a god, whom a god loved so well;
He saw the land saved he had helped to save, and was suffered to tell
Such tidings, yet never decline, but, gloriously as he began,
So to end gloriously — once to shout, thereafter be mute:
Athens is saved! — Pheidippides dies in the shout for his meed.

(1879)

ASOLANDO

EPILOGUE

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,
When you set your fancies free,
Will they pass to where — by death, fools think, imprisoned —
Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so.—
— Pity me?
Oh, to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken!
What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly?
Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivel
— Being — who?

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
'Strive and thrive!' cry 'Speed,— fight on, fare ever
There as here!'

(1890)

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822–1888)

From his father, Dr. Thomas Arnold, afterward headmaster of Rugby, Matthew Arnold may well have inherited the academic tastes that dominated his life. After a schooling at Winchester and Rugby, Arnold won a classical scholarship, in 1841, at Balliol College, Oxford. During his second year at the university, he gained the Newdigate prize by a poem on Cromwell, and in 1845 he was elected to a fellowship at Oriel College. Arnold abandoned Oxford presently, however, in order to become private secretary to the Marquis of Lansdowne, who procured for him, in 1851, an appointment as inspector of schools, from which he was released only a short time before his death. In 1848 he became known to a small circle of readers by his first volume of poems, *The Strayed Reveller and other Poems*, and during the next few years his poetical influence greatly increased, especially through the poems contained in *Poems by Matthew Arnold* (1853), a volume to which he prefaced a notable critical essay on poetry. In 1857 Arnold was elected to the professorship of poetry at Oxford, which he held for ten years, and which provided him the stimulus for writing certain of his best critical essays. The substantial classic *On Translating Homer: Three Lectures given at Oxford* (1861) was followed by *Essays in Criticism* (1865), which promptly fascinated and influenced English readers, as did also the published lectures, *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867). From pure literary criticism Arnold passed, for a time, to studies in religion, ethics, and politics, such as *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), *Friendship's Garland* (1871), *Literature and Dogma* (1873), and *Last Essays on Church and Religion* (1877). He returned subsequently, however, to literary criticism, occupying himself largely in editing, in making selections from poets, and in writing prefaces. In 1883 Arnold received a civil service pension of £250, which enabled him to retire from his duties as inspector of schools. In the winter of 1883–84, he lectured in America, as he did also in 1886. The lectures delivered during his first American tour were published in 1885 as *Discourses in America*.

Arnold's poetry, small in volume, is of almost invariable excellence. Although it makes no strong popular appeal, it has always held a large audience through its grace, gravity, and melody. As a critic, Arnold is preëminent. For a generation or two his canons of poetry, securely expressed in a poised, gentle, and precise style, have dominated English literary criticism.

THE STUDY OF POETRY

'The future of poetry is immense, because in poetry, where it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay. There is not a creed which is not shaken, not an accredited dogma which is not shown to be questionable, not a received tradition which does not threaten to dissolve. Our religion has materialized itself in the fact, in the supposed fact; it has attached its emotion to the fact, and now the fact is failing it. But for poetry the idea is everything; the rest is a world of illusion, of divine illusion. Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea; the idea *is* the fact. The strongest part of our religion to-day is its unconscious poetry.'

Let me be permitted to quote these words of my own, as uttering the thought which should, in my opinion, go with us and govern us in all our study of poetry. In the present work it is the course of one great contributory stream to the world-river of poetry that we are invited to follow. We are here invited to trace the stream of English poetry. But whether we set ourselves, as here, to follow only one of the several streams that make the mighty river of poetry, or whether we seek to know them all, our governing thought should be the same. We should conceive of poetry worthily, and more highly than it has been the custom to conceive of it. We should conceive of it as capable of higher uses and called to higher destinies, than

those which in general men have assigned to it hitherto. More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry. Science, I say, will appear incomplete without it. For finely and truly does Wordsworth call poetry 'the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science;' and what is a countenance without its expression? Again, Wordsworth finely and truly calls poetry 'the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge:' our religion, parading evidences such as those on which the popular mind relies now; our philosophy, pluming itself on its reasonings about causation and finite and infinite being; what are they but the shadows and dreams and false shows of knowledge? The day will come when we shall wonder at ourselves for having trusted to them, for having taken them seriously; and the more we perceive their hollowness, the more we shall prize 'the breath and finer spirit of knowledge' offered to us by poetry.

But if we conceive thus highly of the destinies of poetry, we must also set our standard for poetry high, since poetry, to be capable of fulfilling such high destinies, must be poetry of a high order of excellence. We must accustom ourselves to a high standard and to a strict judgment. Sainte-Beuve relates that Napoleon one day said, when somebody was spoken of in his presence as a charlatan: 'Charlatan as much as you please; but where is there *not* charlatanism?' 'Yes,' answers Sainte-Beuve, 'in politics, in the art of governing mankind, that is perhaps true. But in the order of thought, in art, the glory, the eternal honor is that charlatanism shall find no entrance; herein lies the inviolableness of that noble portion of man's being.' It is admirably said, and let us hold fast to it. In poetry, which is thought and art in one, it is the glory, the eternal honor, that charlatanism shall find no entrance; that this noble sphere be kept inviolate and inviolable. Charlatanism is for confusing or obliterating the distinctions between excellent and inferior, sound and unsound or only half-sound, true and untrue or only half-true. It is charlatanism, conscious or unconscious, whenever we confuse or obliterate these. And in poetry, more than anywhere else, it is unpermissible to confuse or obliterate them. For in poetry the distinction between excellent and inferior, sound and unsound or only half-sound, true and untrue or only half-true, is of paramount importance. It is of paramount importance because of the high destinies of poetry. In poetry, as a criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such a criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty, the spirit of our race will find, we have said, as time goes on and as other helps fail, its consolation and stay. But the consolation and stay will be of power in proportion to the power of the criticism of life. And the criticism of life will be of power in proportion as the poetry conveying it is excellent rather than inferior, sound rather than unsound or half-sound, true rather than untrue or half-true.

The best poetry is what we want; the best poetry will be found to have a power of forming, sustaining, and delighting us, as nothing else can. A clearer, deeper sense of the best in poetry, and of the strength and joy to be drawn from it, is the most precious benefit which we can gather from a poetical collection such as the present. And yet in the very nature and conduct of such a collection there is inevitably something which tends to obscure in us the consciousness of what our benefit should be, and to distract us from the pursuit of it. We should therefore steadily set it before our minds at the outset, and should compel ourselves to revert constantly to the thought of it as we proceed.

Yes; constantly, in reading poetry, a sense for the best, the really excellent, and of the strength and joy to be drawn from it, should be present in our minds and should govern our estimate of what we read. But this real estimate, the only true one, is liable to be superseded, if we are not watchful, by two other kinds of estimate, the historic estimate and the personal estimate, both of which are fallacious. A poet or a poem may count to us historically, they may count to us on grounds personal to ourselves, and

they may count to us really. They may count to us historically. The course of development of a nation's language, thought, and poetry, is profoundly interesting; and by regarding a poet's work as a stage in this course of development we may easily bring ourselves to make it of more importance as poetry than in itself it really is, we may come to use a language of quite exaggerated praise in criticizing it; in short, to overrate it. So arises in our poetic judgments the fallacy caused by the estimate which we may call historic. Then, again, a poet or a poem may count to us on grounds personal to ourselves. Our personal affinities, likings, and circumstances, have great power to sway our estimate of this or that poet's work, and to make us attach more importance to it as poetry than in itself it really possesses, because to us it is, or has been, of high importance. Here also we overrate the object of our interest, and apply to it a language of praise which is quite exaggerated. And thus we get the source of a second fallacy in our poetic judgments,—the fallacy caused by an estimate which we may call personal.

Both fallacies are natural. It is evident how naturally the study of the history and development of a poetry may incline a man to pause over reputations and works once conspicuous but now obscure, and to quarrel with a careless public for skipping, in obedience to mere tradition and habit, from one famous name or work in its national poetry to another, ignorant of what it misses, and of the reason for keeping what it keeps, and of the whole process of growth in its poetry. The French have become diligent students of their own early poetry, which they long neglected; the study makes many of them dissatisfied with this so-called classical poetry, the court-tragedy of the seventeenth century, a poetry which Pellisson long ago reproached with its want of the true poetic stamp, with its *politesse stérile et rampante* [sterile and servile politeness], but which nevertheless has reigned in France as absolutely as if it had been the perfection of classical poetry indeed. The dissatisfaction is natural; yet a lively and accomplished critic, M. Charles d'Héricault, the editor of Clément Marot, goes too far when he says that 'the cloud of glory playing round a classic is a mist as dangerous to the future of a literature as it is intolerable for the purposes of history.' 'It hinders,' he goes on, 'it hinders us from seeing more than one single point, the culminating and exceptional point; the summary, fictitious and arbitrary, of a thought and of a work. It substitutes a halo for a physiognomy, it puts a statue where there was once a man, and hiding from us all trace of the labor, the attempts, the weaknesses, the failures, it claims not study but veneration; it does not show us how the thing is done, it imposes upon us a model. Above all, for the historian this creation of classic personages is inadmissible; for it withdraws the poet from his time, from his proper life, it breaks historical relationships, it blinds criticism by conventional admiration, and renders the investigation of literary origins unacceptable. It gives us a human personage no longer, but a God seated immovable amidst his perfect work, like Jupiter on Olympus; and hardly will it be possible for the young student, to whom such work is exhibited at such a distance from him, to believe that it did not issue ready made from that divine head.'

All this is brilliantly and tellingly said, but we must plead for a distinction. Everything depends on the reality of a poet's classic character. If he is a dubious classic, let us sift him; if he is a false classic, let us explode him. But if he is a real classic, if his work belongs to the class of the very best (for this is the true and right meaning of the word *classic, classical*), then the great thing for us is to feel and enjoy his work as deeply as ever we can, and to appreciate the wide difference between it and all work which has not the same high character. This is what is salutary, this is what is formative; this is the great benefit to be got from the study of poetry. Everything which interferes with it, which hinders it, is injurious. True, we must read our classic with open eyes, and not with eyes blinded with superstition; we must perceive when his work comes short, when it drops out of the class of the very best, and we must rate it, in such cases, at its proper value. But the use of this negative criticism is not in

itself, it is entirely in its enabling us to have a clearer sense and a deeper enjoyment of what is truly excellent. To trace the labor, the attempts, the weaknesses, the failures of a genuine classic, to acquaint oneself with his time and his life and his historical relationships, is mere literary dilettantism unless it has that clear sense and deeper enjoyment for its end. It may be said that the more we know about a classic the better we shall enjoy him; and, if we lived as long as Methuselah and had all of us heads of perfect clearness and wills of perfect steadfastness, this might be true in fact as it is plausible in theory. But the case here is much the same as the case with the Greek and Latin studies of our schoolboys. The elaborate philological groundwork which we require them to lay is in theory an admirable preparation for appreciating the Greek and Latin authors worthily. The more thoroughly we lay the groundwork, the better we shall be able, it may be said, to enjoy the authors. True, if time were not so short, and schoolboys' wits not so soon tired and their power of attention exhausted; only, as it is, the elaborate philological preparation goes on, but the authors are little known and less enjoyed. So with the investigator of 'historic origins' in poetry. He ought to enjoy the true classic all the better for his investigations; he often is distracted from the enjoyment of the best, and with the less good he overbusies himself, and is prone to overrate it in proportion to the trouble which it has cost him.

The idea of tracing historic origins and historical relationships cannot be absent from a compilation like the present. And naturally the poets to be exhibited in it will be assigned to those persons for exhibition who are known to prize them highly, rather than to those who have no special inclination towards them. Moreover the very occupation with an author, and the business of exhibiting him, disposes us to affirm and amplify his importance. In the present work, therefore, we are sure of frequent temptation to adopt the historic estimate, or the personal estimate, and to forget the real estimate; which latter, nevertheless, we must employ if we are to make poetry yield us its full benefit. So high is that benefit, the benefit of clearly feeling and of deeply enjoying the really excellent, the truly classic in poetry, that we do well, I say, to set it fixedly before our minds as our object in studying poets and poetry, and to make the desire of attaining it the one principle to which, as the *Imitation* says, whatever we may read or come to know, we always return. *Cum multa legeris et cognoveris, ad unum semper oportet redire principium* [When you have read and known many things, you ought always to revert to the one beginning].

The historic estimate is likely in especial to affect our judgment and our language when we are dealing with ancient poets; the personal estimate when we are dealing with poets our contemporaries, or at any rate modern. The exaggerations due to the historic estimate are not in themselves, perhaps, of very much gravity. Their report hardly enters the general ear; probably they do not always impose even on the literary men who adopt them. But they lead to a dangerous abuse of language. So we hear Cædmon, amongst our own poets, compared to Milton. I have already noticed the enthusiasm of one accomplished French critic for 'historic origins.' Another eminent French critic, M. Vitet, comments upon that famous document of the early poetry of his nation, the *Chanson de Roland.* It is indeed a most interesting document. The *joculator* or *jongleur* Taillefer, who was with William the Conqueror's army at Hastings, marched before the Norman troops, so said the tradition, singing 'of Charlemagne and of Roland and of Oliver, and of the vassals who died at Roncevaux'; and it is suggested that in the *Chanson de Roland* by one Turoldus or Théroulde, a poem preserved in a manuscript of the twelfth century in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, we have certainly the matter, perhaps even some of the words of the chaunt which Taillefer sang. The poem has vigor and freshness; it is not without pathos. But M. Vitet is not satisfied with seeing in it a document of some poetic value, and of very high historic and linguistic value; he sees in it a grand and beautiful work, a monument of epic genius. In its general design he finds the grandiose concep-

tion, in its details he finds the constant union of simplicity with greatness, which are the marks, he truly says, of the genuine epic, and distinguish it from the artificial epic of literary ages. One thinks of Homer; this is the sort of praise which is given to Homer, and justly given. Higher praise there cannot well be, and it is the praise due to epic poetry of the highest order only, and to no other. Let us try, then, the *Chanson de Roland* at its best. Roland, mortally wounded, lays himself down under a pine tree, with his face turned toward Spain and the enemy:

De plusurs choses à remembrer li prist
De tantes teres cume li bers cunquist,
De dulce France, des humes de sun lign,
De Carlemagne sun seignor ki l'nurrit.[1]

That is primitive work, I repeat, with an undeniable poetic quality of its own. It deserves such praise and such praise is sufficient for it. But now turn to Homer:

Ὣς φάτο, τοὺς δ' ἤδη κατέχεν φυσίζοος αἶα
ἐν Λακεδαίμονι αὖθι, φίλῃ ἐν πατρίδι γαίῃ.[2]

We are here in another world, another order of poetry altogether; here is rightly due such supreme praise as that which M. Vitet gives to the *Chanson de Roland*. If our words are to have any meaning, if our judgments are to have any solidity, we must not heap that supreme praise upon poetry of an order immeasurably inferior.

Indeed there can be no more useful help for discovering what poetry belongs to the class of the truly excellent, and can therefore do us most good, than to have always in one's mind lines and expressions of the great masters, and to apply them as a touchstone to other poetry. Of course we are not to require this other poetry to resemble them: it may be very dissimilar. But if we have any tact we shall find them, when we have lodged them well in our minds, an infallible touchstone for detecting the presence or absence of high poetic quality, and also the degree of this quality, in all other poetry which we may place beside them. Short passages, even single lines, will serve our turn quite sufficiently. Take the two lines which I have just quoted from Homer, the poet's comment on Helen's mention of her brothers; or take his

Ἆ δειλὼ τί σφῶϊ δόμεν Πηλῆϊ ἄνακτι
θνητῷ; ὑμεῖς δ' ἐστὸν ἀγήρω τ' ἀθανάτω τε.
ἦ ἵνα δυστήνοισι μετ' ἀνδράσιν ἄλγε' ἔχητον;[3]

the address of Zeus to the horses of Peleus; or, take finally, his

Καὶ σέ, γέρον, τὸ πρὶν μὲν ἀκούομεν ὄλβιον εἶναι[4]

the words of Achilles to Priam, a suppliant before him. Take that incomparable line and a half of Dante, Ugolino's tremendous words:

Io no piangeva; sì dentro impietrai.
Piangevan elli . .

take the lovely words of Beatrice to Virgil:

Io son fatta da Dio, sua mercè, tale,
Che la vostra miseria non mi tange,
Nè fiamma d'esto incendio non
m'assale . . .[6]

take the simple, but perfect, single line:

In la sua volontade è nostra pace.[7]

Take of Shakespeare a line or two of Henry the Fourth's expostulation with sleep:

Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast

[1] 'Then began he to call many things to remembrance,— all the lands which his valor conquered, and pleasant France, and the men of his lineage, and Charlemagne his liege lord who nourished him.'— *Chanson de Roland,* iii. 939-942.

[2] 'So said she; they long since in Earth's soft arms were reposing,
There, in their own dear land, their fatherland, Lacedæmon.'
Iliad, iii. 243-4 (translated by Dr. Hawtrey).

[3] Ah, unhappy pair, why gave we you to King Peleus, to a mortal? but ye are without old age, and immortal. Was it that with men born to misery ye might have sorrow?'— *Iliad,* xvii. 443-445.

[4] 'Nay, and thou too, old man, in former days wast, as we hear, happy.'— *Iliad,* xxiv. 543.

[5] 'I wailed not, so of stone grew I within; — *they* wailed.'— *Inferno,* xxxiii. 39, 40.

[6] 'Of such sort hath God, thanked be his mercy, made me, that your misery toucheth me not, neither doth the flame of this fire strike me.'— *Inferno,* ii. 91-93.

[7] 'In His will is our peace.'— *Paradiso,* iii. 85.

Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains
In cradle of the rude imperious surge . . .
. . .

and take, as well, Hamlet's dying request to Horatio:

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain
To tell my story . . .

Take of Milton that Miltonic passage:

Darkened so, yet shone
Above them all the archangel; but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care
Sat on his faded cheek . . .

add two such lines as:

And courage never to submit or yield
And what is else not to be overcome . . .

and finish with the exquisite close to the loss of Proserpine, the loss

. . . which cost Ceres all that pain
To seek her through the world.

These few lines, if we have tact and can use them, are enough even of themselves to keep clear and sound our judgments about poetry, to save us from fallacious estimates of it, to conduct us to a real estimate.

The specimens I have quoted differ widely from one another, but they have in common this: the possession of the very highest poetical quality. If we are thoroughly penetrated by their power, we shall find that we have acquired a sense enabling us, whatever poetry may be laid before us, to feel the degree in which a high poetical quality is present or wanting there. Critics give themselves great labor to draw out what in the abstract constitutes the characters of a high quality of poetry. It is much better simply to have recourse to concrete examples: — to take specimens of poetry of the high, the very highest quality, and to say: The characters of a high quality of poetry are what is expressed *there*. They are far better recognized by being felt in the verse of the master, than by being perused in the prose of the critic. Nevertheless if we are urgently pressed to give some critical account of them, we may safely, perhaps, venture on laying down, not indeed how and why the characters arise, but where and in what they arise. They are in the matter and substance of the poetry, and they are in its manner and style. Both of these, the substance and matter on the one hand, the style and manner on the other, have a mark, an accent, of high beauty, worth, and power. But if we are asked to define this mark and accent in the abstract, our answer must be: No, for we should thereby be darkening the question, not clearing it. The mark and accent are as given by the substance and matter of that poetry, by the style and manner of that poetry, and of all other poetry which is akin to it in quality.

Only one thing we may add as to the substance and matter of poetry, guiding ourselves by Aristotle's profound observation that the superiority of poetry over history consists in its possessing a higher truth and a higher seriousness (*φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ σπουδαιότερον*) [more philosophic and more serious]. Let us add, therefore, to what we have said, this: that the substance and matter of the best poetry acquire their special character from possessing, in an eminent degree, truth and seriousness. We may add yet further, what is in itself evident, that to the style and manner of the best poetry their special character, their accent, is given by their diction, and, even yet more, by their movement. And though we distinguish between the two characters, the two accents, of superiority, yet they are nevertheless vitally connected one with the other. The superior character of truth and seriousness, in the matter and substance of the best poetry, is inseparable from the superiority of diction and movement marking its style and manner. The two superiorities are closely related, and are in steadfast proportion one to the other. So far as high poetic truth and seriousness are wanting to a poet's matter and substance, so far also we may be sure, will a high poetic stamp of diction and movement be wanting to his style and manner. In proportion as this high stamp of diction and movement, again, is absent from a poet's style and manner,

we shall find, also, that high poetic truth and seriousness are absent from his substance and matter.

So stated, these are but dry generalities; their whole force lies in their application. And I could wish every student of poetry to make the application of them for himself. Made by himself, the application would impress itself upon his mind far more deeply than made by me. Neither will my limits allow me to make any full application of the generalities above propounded; but in the hope of bringing out, at any rate, some significance in them, and of establishing an important principle more firmly by their means, I will, in the space which remains to me, follow rapidly from the commencement the course of our English poetry with them in my view.

Once more I return to the early poetry of France, with which our own poetry, in its origins, is indissolubly connected. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, that seed-time of all modern language and literature, the poetry of France had a clear predominance in Europe. Of the two divisions of that poetry, its productions in the *langue d' oil* and its productions in the *langue d' oc,* the poetry of the *langue d' oc,* of southern France, of the troubadours, is of importance because of its effect on Italian literature; — the first literature of modern Europe to strike the true and grand note, and to bring forth, as in Dante and Petrarch it brought forth, classics. But the predominance of French poetry in Europe, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, is due to its poetry of the *langue d' oil,* the poetry of northern France and of the tongue which is now the French language. In the twelfth century the bloom of this romance-poetry was earlier and stronger in England, at the court of our Anglo-Norman kings, than in France itself. But it was a bloom of French poetry; and as our native poetry formed itself, it formed itself out of this. The romance-poems which took possession of the heart and imagination of Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are French; 'they are,' as Southey justly says, 'the pride of French literature, nor have we anything which can be placed in competition with them.' Themes were supplied from all quarters; but the romance-setting which was common to them all, and which gained the ear of Europe, was French. This constituted for the French poetry, literature, and language, at the height of the Middle Age, an unchallenged predominance. The Italian Brunetto Latini, the master of Dante, wrote his *Treasure* in French because, he says, '*la parleure en est plus délitable et plus commune à toutes gens.*' In the same century, the thirteenth, the French romance-writer, Christian of Troyes, formulates the claims, in chivalry and letters, of France, his native country, as follows:

> Or vous ert par ce livre apris,
> Que Gresse ot de chevalerie
> Le premier los et de clergie;
> Puis vint chevalerie à Rome,
> Et de la clergie la some,
> Qui ore est en France venue.
> Diex doinst qu'ele i soit retenue,
> Et que li lius li abelisse
> Tant que de France n'isse
> L'onor qui s'i est arestée!

'Now by this book you will learn that first Greece had the renown for chivalry and letters; then chivalry and the primacy in letters passed to Rome, and now it is come to France. God grant it may be kept there; and that the place may please it so well, that the honor which has come to make stay in France may never depart thence!'

Yet it is now all gone, this French romance-poetry, of which the weight of substance and the power of style are not unfairly represented by this extract from Christian of Troyes. Only by means of the historic estimate can we persuade ourselves now to think that any of it is of poetical importance.

But in the fourteenth century there comes an Englishman nourished on this poetry, taught his trade by this poetry, getting words, rime, meter from this poetry; for even of that stanza which the Italians used, and which Chaucer derived immediately from the Italians, the basis and suggestion was probably given in France. Chaucer (I have already named him) fascinated his contemporaries, but so too did Christian of Troyes and Wolfram of Eschenbach. Chaucer's power of fascination, however, is enduring; his poetical importance does not need the

assistance of the historic estimate, it is real. He is a genuine source of joy and strength which is flowing still for us and will flow always. He will be read, as time goes on, far more generally than he is read now. His language is a cause of difficulty for us; but so also, and I think in quite as great a degree, is the language of Burns. In Chaucer's case, as in that of Burns, it is a difficulty to be unhesitatingly accepted and overcome.

If we ask ourselves wherein consists the immense superiority of Chaucer's poetry over the romance-poetry, why it is that in passing from this to Chaucer we suddenly feel ourselves to be in another world, we shall find that his superiority is both in the substance of his poetry and in the style of his poetry. His superiority in substance is given by his large, free, simple, clear yet kindly view of human life,— so unlike the total want, in the romance-poets, of all intelligent command of it. Chaucer has not their helplessness; he has gained the power to survey the world from a central, a truly human point of view. We have only to call to mind the Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*. The right comment upon it is Dryden's: 'It is sufficient to say, according to the proverb, that *here is God's plenty*.' And again: 'He is a perpetual fountain of good sense.' It is by a large, free, sound representation of things, that poetry, this high criticism of life, has truth of substance; and Chaucer's poetry has truth of substance.

Of his style and manner, if we think first of the romance-poetry and then of Chaucer's divine liquidness of diction, his divine fluidity of movement, it is difficult to speak temperately. They are irresistible, and justify all the rapture with which his successors speak of his 'gold dew-drops of speech.' Johnson misses the point entirely when he finds fault with Dryden for ascribing to Chaucer the first refinement of our numbers, and says that Gower also can show smooth numbers and easy rimes. The refinement of our numbers means something far more than this. A nation may have versifiers with smooth numbers and easy rimes, and yet may have no real poetry at all. Chaucer is the father of our splendid English poetry, he is our 'well of English undefiled,' because by the lovely charm of his diction, the lovely charm of his movement, he makes an epoch and founds a tradition. In Spenser, Shakspere, Milton, Keats, we can follow the tradition of the liquid diction, the fluid movement, of Chaucer; at one time it is his liquid diction of which in these poets we feel the virtue, and at another time it is his fluid movement. And the virtue is irresistible.

Bounded as is my space, I must yet find room for an example of Chaucer's virtue, as I have given examples to show the virtue of the great classics. I feel disposed to say that a single line is enough to show the charm of Chaucer's verse; that merely one line like this:

O martyr souded[1] in virginitee!

has a virtue of manner and movement such as we shall not find in all the verse of romance-poetry; — but this is saying nothing. The virtue is such as we shall not find, perhaps, in all English poetry, outside the poets whom I have named as the special inheritors of Chaucer's tradition. A single line, however, is too little if we have not the strain of Chaucer's verse well in our memory; let us take a stanza. It is from *The Prioress's Tale*, the story of the Christian child murdered in a Jewry: —

My throte is cut unto my nekke-bone,
Saidè this child, and as by way of kinde
I should have deyd, yea, longè time agone;
But Jesu Christ, as ye in bookès finde,
Will that his glory last and be in minde
And for the worship of his mother dere
Yet may I sing *O Alma* loud and clere.

Wordsworth has modernized this Tale, and to feel how delicate and evanescent is the charm of verse, we have only to read Wordsworth's first three lines of this stanza after Chaucer's: —

My throat is cut unto the bone, I trow,
Said this young child, and by the law of kind
I should have died, yea, many hours ago.

The charm is departed. It is often said that the power of liquidness and fluidity in Chaucer's verse was dependent

[1] The French *soudé;* soldered, fixed fast.

upon a free, a licentious dealing with language, such as is now impossible; upon a liberty, such as Burns too enjoyed, of making words like *neck, bird,* into a dissyllable by adding to them, and words like *cause, rime,* into a dissyllable by sounding the *e* mute. It is true that Chaucer's fluidity is conjoined with this liberty, and is admirably served by it; but we ought not to say that it was dependent upon it. It was dependent upon his talent. Other poets with a like liberty do not attain to the fluidity of Chaucer; Burns himself does not attain to it. Poets again, who have a talent akin to Chaucer's, such as Shakspere or Keats, have known how to attain to his fluidity without the like liberty.

And yet Chaucer is not one of the great classics. His poetry transcends and effaces, easily and without effort, all the romance-poetry of Catholic Christendom; it transcends and effaces all the English poetry contemporary with it, it transcends and effaces all the English poetry subsequent to it down to the age of Elizabeth. Of such avail is poetic truth of substance, in its natural and necessary union with poetic truth of style. And yet, I say, Chaucer is not one of the great classics. He has not their accent. What is wanting to him is suggested by the mere mention of the name of the first great classic of Christendom, the immortal poet who died eighty years before Chaucer,— Dante. The accent of such verse as

> In la sua volontade è nostra pace . . .

is altogether beyond Chaucer's reach; we praise him, but we feel that this accent is out of the question for him. It may be said that it was necessarily out of the reach of any poet in the England of that stage of growth. Possibly; but we are to adopt a real, not a historic, estimate of poetry. However we may account for its absence, something is wanting, then, to the poetry of Chaucer, which poetry must have before it can be placed in the glorious class of the best. And there is no doubt what that something is. It is the σπουδαιότης, the high and excellent seriousness, which Aristotle assigns as one of the grand virtues of poetry. The substance of Chaucer's poetry, his view of things and his criticism of life, has largeness, freedom, shrewdness, benignity; but it has not this high seriousness. Homer's criticism of life has it, Dante's has it, Shakspere's has it. It is this chiefly which gives to our spirits what they can rest upon; and with the increasing demands of our modern ages upon poetry, this virtue of giving us what we can rest upon will be more and more highly esteemed. A voice from the slums of Paris, fifty or sixty years after Chaucer, the voice of poor Villon out of his life of riot and crime, has at its happy moments (as, for instance, in the last stanza of *La Belle Heaulmière*[1]) more of this important poetic virtue of seriousness than all the productions of Chaucer. But its apparition in Villon, and in men like Villon, is fitful; the greatness of the great poets, the power of their criticism of life, is that their virtue is sustained.

To our praise, therefore, of Chaucer as a poet there must be this limitation; he lacks the high seriousness of the great classics, and therewith an important part of their virtue. Still, the main fact for us to bear in mind about Chaucer is his sterling value according to that real estimate which we firmly adopt for all poets. He has poetic truth of substance, though he has not high poetic seriousness, and corresponding to his truth of substance he has an exquisite virtue of style and manner. With him is born our real poetry.

But for my present purpose I need not dwell on our Elizabethan poetry, or on the continuation and close of this poetry in Milton. We all of us profess to be

[1] The name *Heaulmière* is said to be derived from a head-dress (helm) worn as a mark by courtesans. In Villon's ballad, a poor old creature of this class laments her days of youth and beauty. The last stanza of the ballad runs thus: —

> Ainsi le bon temps regretons
> Entre nous, pauvres vieilles sottes,
> Assises bas, à croppetons,
> Tout en ung tas comme pelottes;
> A petit feu de chenevottes
> Tost allumées, tost estainctes.
> Et jadis fusmes si mignottes!
> Ainsi en prend à maintz et maintes.

Thus amongst ourselves we regret the good time, poor silly old things, low-seated on our heels, all in a heap like so many balls; by a little fire of hemp-stalks, soon lighted, soon spent. And once we were such darlings! So fares it with many and many a one.'

agreed in the estimate of this poetry; we all of us recognize it as great poetry, our greatest, and Shakspere and Milton as our poetical classics. The real estimate, here, has universal currency. With the next age of our poetry divergency and difficulty begin. An historic estimate of that poetry has established itself; and the question is, whether it will be found to coincide with the real estimate.

The age of Dryden, together with our whole eighteenth century which followed it, sincerely believed itself to have produced poetical classics of its own, and even to have made advance, in poetry, beyond all its predecessors. Dryden regards as not seriously disputable the opinion 'that the sweetness of English verse was never understood or practised by our fathers.' Cowley could see nothing at all in Chaucer's poetry. Dryden heartily admired it, and, as we have seen, praised its matter admirably; but of its exquisite manner and movement all he can find to say is that 'there is the rude sweetness of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleasing, though not perfect.' Addison, wishing to praise Chaucer's numbers, compares them with Dryden's own. And all through the eighteenth century, and down even into our own times, the stereotyped phrase of approbation for good verse found in our early poetry has been, that it even approached the verse of Dryden, Addison, Pope, and Johnson.

Are Dryden and Pope poetical classics? Is the historic estimate, which represents them as such, and which has been so long established that it cannot easily give way, the real estimate? Wordsworth and Coleridge, as is well known, denied it; but the authority of Wordsworth and Coleridge does not weigh much with the young generation, and there are many signs to show that the eighteenth century and its judgments are coming into favor again. Are the favorite poets of the eighteenth century classics?

It is impossible within my present limits to discuss the question fully. And what man of letters would not shrink from seeming to dispose dictatorially of the claims of two men who are, at any rate, such masters in letters as Dryden and Pope; two men of such admirable talent, both of them, and one of them, Dryden, a man, on all sides, of such energetic and genial power? And yet, if we are to gain the full benefit from poetry, we must have the real estimate of it. I cast about for some mode of arriving, in the present case, at such an estimate without offence. And perhaps the best way is to begin, as it is easy to begin, with cordial praise.

When we find Chapman, the Elizabethan translator of Homer, expressing himself in his preface thus: 'Though truth in her very nakedness sit in so deep a pit, that from Gades to Aurora and Ganges few eyes can sound her, I hope yet those few here will so discover and confirm, that, the date being out of her darkness in this morning of our poet, he shall now gird his temples with the sun,' — we pronounce that such a prose is intolerable. When we find Milton writing: 'And long it was not after, when I was confirmed in this opinion, that he, who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem,' — we pronounce that such a prose has its own grandeur, but that it is obsolete and inconvenient. But when we find Dryden telling us: 'What Virgil wrote in the vigor of his age, in plenty and at ease, I have undertaken to translate in my declining years, struggling with wants, oppressed with sickness, curbed in my genius, liable to be misconstrued in all I write,' — then we exclaim that here at last we have the true English prose, a prose such as we would all gladly use if we only knew how. Yet Dryden was Milton's contemporary.

But after the Restoration the time had come when our nation felt the imperious need of a fit prose. So, too, the time had likewise come when our nation felt the imperious need of freeing itself from the absorbing preoccupation which religion in the Puritan age had exercised. It was impossible that this freedom should be brought about without some negative excess, without some neglect and impairment of the religious life of the soul; and the spiritual history of the eighteenth century shows us that the freedom was not achieved without them. Still, the freedom was achieved; the preoccupation, an undoubtedly baneful and retarding one if it had continued, was got rid of. And

as with religion amongst us at that period, so it was also with letters. A fit prose was a necessity; but it was impossible that a fit prose should establish itself amongst us without some touch of frost to the imaginative life of the soul. The needful qualities for a fit prose are regularity, uniformity, precision, balance. The men of letters, whose destiny it may be to bring their nation to the attainment of a fit prose, must of necessity, whether they work in prose or in verse, give a predominating, an almost exclusive attention to the qualities of regularity, uniformity, precision, balance. But an almost exclusive attention to these qualities involves some repression and silencing of poetry.

We are to regard Dryden as the puissant and glorious founder, Pope as the splendid high-priest, of our age of prose and reason, of our excellent and indispensable eighteenth century. For the purposes of their mission and destiny their poetry, like their prose, is admirable. Do you ask me whether Dryden's verse, take it almost where you will, is not good?

A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchanged,
Fed on the lawns and in the forest ranged.

I answer: Admirable for the purposes of the inaugurator of an age of prose and reason. Do you ask me whether Pope's verse, take it almost where you will, is not good?

To Hounslow Heath I point, and Banstead Down;
Thence comes your mutton, and these chicks my own.

I answer: Admirable for the purposes of the high-priest of an age of prose and reason. But do you ask me whether such verse proceeds from men with an adequate poetic criticism of life, from men whose criticism of life has a high seriousness, or even, without that high seriousness, has poetic largeness, freedom, insight, benignity? Do you ask me whether the application of ideas to life in the verse of these men, often a powerful application, no doubt, is a powerful *poetic* application? Do you ask me whether the poetry of these men has either the matter or the inseparable manner of such an adequate poetic criticism; whether it has the accent of

Absent thee from felicity awhile . .

or of

And what is else not to be overcome . .

or of

O martyr souded in virginitee!

I answer: It has not and cannot have them; it is the poetry of the builders of an age of prose and reason. Though they may write in verse, though they may in a certain sense be masters of the art of versification, Dryden and Pope are not classics of our poetry, they are classics of our prose.

Gray is our poetical classic of that literature and age; the position of Gray is singular, and demands a word of notice here. He has not the volume or the power of poets who, coming in times more favorable, have attained to an independent criticism of life. But he lived with the great poets, he lived, above all, with the Greeks, through perpetually studying and enjoying them; and he caught their poetic point of view for regarding life, caught their poetic manner. The point of view and the manner are not self-sprung in him, he caught them of others; and he had not the free and abundant use of them. But whereas Addison and Pope never had the use of them, Gray had the use of them at times He is the scantiest and frailest of classics in our poetry, but he is a classic.

And now, after Gray, we are met, as we draw towards the end of the eighteenth century, we are met by the great name of Burns. We enter now on times where the personal estimate of poets begins to be rife, and where the real estimate of them is not reached without difficulty. But in spite of the disturbing pressures of personal partiality, of national partiality, let us try to reach a real estimate of the poetry of Burns.

By his English poetry Burns in general belongs to the eighteenth century, and has little importance for us.

Mark ruffian Violence, distained with crimes,
Rousing elate in these degenerate times;
View unsuspecting Innocence a prey,
As guileful Fraud points out the erring way;
While subtle Litigation's pliant tongue
The life-blood equal sucks of Right and Wrong!

Evidently this is not the real Burns, or his name and fame would have disappeared long ago. Nor is Clarinda's love-poet, Sylvander, the real Burns either. But he tells us himself: 'These English songs gravel me to death. I have not the command of the language that I have of my native tongue. In fact, I think that my ideas are more barren in English than in Scotch. I have been at *Duncan Gray* to dress it in English, but all I can do is desperately stupid.' We English turn naturally, in Burns, to the poems in our own language, because we can read them easily; but in those poems we have not the real Burns.

The real Burns is of course in his Scotch poems. Let us boldly say that of much of this poetry, a poetry dealing perpetually with Scotch drink, Scotch religion, and Scotch manners, a Scotchman's estimate is apt to be personal. A Scotchman is used to this world of Scotch drink, Scotch religion, and Scotch manners; he has a tenderness for it; he meets its poet half way. In this tender mood he reads pieces like the *Holy Fair* or *Halloween*. But this world of Scotch drink, Scotch religion, and Scotch manners is against a poet, not for him, when it is not a partial countryman who reads him; for in itself it is not a beautiful world, and no one can deny that it is of advantage to a poet to deal with a beautiful world. Burn's world of Scotch drink, Scotch religion, and Scotch manners, is often a harsh, a sordid, a repulsive world; even the world of his *Cotter's Saturday Night* is not a beautiful world. No doubt a poet's criticism of life may have such truth and power that it triumphs over its world and delights us. Burns may triumph over his world, often he does triumph over his world, but let us observe how and where. Burns is the first case we have had where the bias of the personal estimate tends to mislead; let us look at him closely, he can bear it.

Many of his admirers will tell us that we have Burns, convivial, genuine, delightful, here:

Leeze me on drink! it gies us mair
Than either school or college;
It kindles wit, it waukens lair,
It pangs us fou o' knowledge,
Be 't whiskey gill or penny wheep
Or ony stronger potion,
It never fails, on drinking deep,
To kittle up our notion
By night or day.

There is a great deal of that sort of thing in Burns, and it is unsatisfactory, not because it is bacchanalian poetry, but because it has not that accent of sincerity which bacchanalian poetry, to do it justice, very often has. There is something in it of bravado, something which makes us feel that we have not the man speaking to us with his real voice; something, therefore, poetically unsound.

With still more confidence will his admirers tell us that we have the genuine Burns, the great poet, when his strain asserts the independence, equality, dignity, of men, as in the famous song *For a' that and a' that:*

A prince can mak' a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that;
But an honest man 's aboon his might,
Guid faith he mauna fa' that!
For a' that and a' that,
Their dignities, and a' that,
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.

Here they find his grand, genuine touches; and still more, when this puissant genius, who so often set morality at defiance, falls moralizing:

The sacred lowe o' weel-placed love
Luxuriantly indulge it;
But never tempt th' illicit rove,
Tho' naething should divulge it.

I waive the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard o' concealing,
But och! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling.

Or in a higher strain:

Who made the heart, 't is he alone
Decidedly can try us;

He knows each chord, its various tone;
Each spring, its various bias.
Then at the balance let 's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What 's *done* we partly may compute,
But know not what 's resisted.

Or in a better strain yet, a strain, his admirers will say, unsurpassable:

To make a happy fire-side clime
To weans and wife,
That 's the true pathos and sublime
Of human life.

There is criticism of life for you, the admirers of Burns will say to us; there is the application of ideas to life! There is, undoubtedly. The doctrine of the last-quoted lines coincides almost exactly with what was the aim and end, Xenophon tells us, of all the teaching of Socrates. And the application is a powerful one; made by a man of vigorous understanding, and (need I say?) a master of language.

But for supreme poetical success more is required than the powerful application of ideas to life; it must be an application under the conditions fixed by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty. Those laws fix as an essential condition, in the poet's treatment of such matters as are here in question, high seriousness; — the high seriousness which comes from absolute sincerity. The accent of high seriousness, born of absolute sincerity, is what gives to such verse as

In la sua volontade è nostra pace . . .

to such criticism of life as Dante's, its power. Is this accent felt in the passages which I have been quoting from Burns? Surely not; surely, if our sense is quick, we must perceive that we have not in those passages a voice from the very inmost soul of the genuine Burns; he is not speaking to us from these depths, he is more or less preaching. And the compensation for admiring such passages less, from missing the perfect poetic accent in them, will be that we shall admire more the poetry where that accent is found.

No; Burns, like Chaucer, comes short of the high seriousness of the great classics, and the virtue of matter and manner which goes with that high seriousness is wanting to his work. At moments he touches it in a profound and passionate melancholy, as in those four immortal lines taken by Byron as a motto for *The Giaour,* but which have in them a depth of poetic quality such as resides in no verse of Byron's own:

Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met, or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

But a whole poem of that quality Burns cannot make; the rest, in the *Farewell to Nancy,* is verbiage.

We arrive best at the real estimate of Burns, I think, by conceiving his work as having truth of matter and truth of manner, but not the accent or the poetic virtue of the highest masters. His genuine criticism of life, when the sheer poet in him speaks, is ironic; it is not:

Thou Power Supreme, whose mighty scheme
These woes of mine fulfil,
Here firm I rest, they must be best
Because they are Thy will!

It is far rather: *Whistle owre the lave o' t!* Yet we may say of him as of Chaucer, that of life and the world, as they come before him, his view is large, free, shrewd, benignant,—truly poetic, therefore; and his manner of rendering what he sees is to match. But we must note, at the same time, his great difference from Chaucer. The freedom of Chaucer is heightened, in Burns, by a fiery, reckless energy; the benignity of Chaucer deepens, in Burns, into an overwhelming sense of the pathos of things; — of the pathos of human nature, the pathos, also, of non-human nature. Instead of the fluidity of Chaucer's manner, the manner of Burns has spring, bounding swiftness. Burns is by far the greater force, though he has perhaps less charm. The world of Chaucer is fairer, richer, more significant than that of Burns; but when the largeness and freedom of Burns get full sweep, as in *Tam o' Shanter,* or still more in that puissant and splendid production, *The Jolly Beggars,* his world may be what it will, his poetic genius triumphs over it. In the

world of the *Jolly Beggars* there is more than hideousness and squalor, there is bestiality; yet the piece is a superb poetic success. It has a breadth, truth, and power which make the famous scene in Auerbach's Cellar, of Goethe's *Faust,* seem artificial and tame beside it, and which are only matched by Shakspere and Aristophanes.

Here, where his largeness and freedom serve him so admirably, and also in those poems and songs, where to shrewdness he adds infinite archness and wit, and to benignity infinite pathos, where his manner is flawless, and a perfect poetic whole is the result,— in things like the address to the Mouse whose home he had ruined, in things like *Duncan Gray, Tam Glen, Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad, Auld lang syne* (the list might be made much longer),— here we have the genuine Burns, of whom the real estimate must be high indeed. Not a classic, nor with the excellent σπουδαιότης [seriousness] of the great classics, nor with a verse rising to a criticism of life and a virtue like theirs; but a poet with thorough truth of substance and an answering truth of style, giving us a poetry sound to the core. We all of us have a leaning towards the pathetic, and may be inclined perhaps to prize Burns most for his touches of piercing, sometimes almost intolerable, pathos; for verse like:

> We twa hae paidl't i' the burn
> From mornin' sun till dine;
> But seas between us braid hae roar'd,
> Sin auld lang syne . . .

where he is as lovely as he is sound. But perhaps it is by the perfection of soundness of his lighter and archer masterpieces that he is poetically most wholesome for us. For the votary misled by a personal estimate of Shelley, as so many of us have been, are, and will be,— of that beautiful spirit building his many-colored haze of words and images

> Pinnacled dim in the intense inane—

no contact can be wholesomer than the contact with Burns at his archest and soundest. Side by side with the

> On the brink of the night and the morning
> My coursers are wont to respire,
> But the Earth has just whispered a warning,
> That their flight must be swifter than fire . . .

of *Prometheus Unbound,* how salutary, how very salutary, to place this from *Tam Glen:*

> My minnie does constantly deave me
> And bids me beware o' young men;
> They flatter, she says, to deceive me;
> But wha can think sae o' Tam Glen?

But we enter on burning ground as we approach the poetry of times so near to us, poetry like that of Byron, Shelley, and Wordsworth, of which the estimates are so often not only personal, but personal with passion. For my purpose, it is enough to have taken the single case of Burns, the first poet we come to of whose work the estimate formed is evidently apt to be personal, and to have suggested how we may proceed, using the poetry of the great classics as a sort of touchstone, to correct this estimate, as we had previously corrected by the same means the historic estimate where we met with it. A collection like the present, with its succession of celebrated names and celebrated poems, offers a good opportunity to us for resolutely endeavoring to make our estimates of poetry real. I have sought to point out a method which will help us in making them so, and to exhibit it in use so far as to put any one who likes in a way of applying it for himself.

At any rate the end to which the method and the estimate are designed to lead, and from leading to which, if they do lead to it, they get their whole value, — the benefit of being able clearly to feel and deeply to enjoy the best, the truly classic, in poetry,— is an end, let me say it once more at parting, of supreme importance. We are often told that an era is opening in which we are to see multitudes of a common sort of readers, and masses of a common sort of literature; that such readers do not want and could not relish anything better than such literature, and that to provide it is becoming a vast and profitable industry. Even if good literature entirely lost currency with the world, it would still be

abundantly worth while to continue to enjoy it by oneself. But it never will lose currency with the world, in spite of momentary appearances; it never will lose supremacy. Currency and supremacy are insured to it, not indeed by the world's deliberate and conscious choice, but by something far deeper,— by the instinct of self-preservation in humanity.

(1880)

SHAKSPERE

Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask: Thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill
That to the stars uncrowns his majesty,
Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares but the cloudy border of his base
To the foiled searching of mortality:
And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-schooled, self-scanned, self-honored, self-secure,
Didst tread on earth unguessed at. Better so!
All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness that impairs, all griefs that bow,
Find their sole voice in that victorious brow.

(1849)

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

Come, dear children, let us away,
Down and away below!
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow,
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ, and chafe, and toss in the spray,
Children dear, let us away!
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go,
Call once yet!
In a voice that she will know:
'Margaret! Margaret!'
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more!) to a mother's ear;
Children's voices, wild with pain:
Surely she will come again!
Call her once and come away;
This way, this way!
'Mother dear, we cannot stay;
The wild white horses foam and fret.'
Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down;
Call no more!
One last look at the white-walled town,
And the little gray church on the windy shore;
Then come down!
She will not come though you call all day:
Come away, come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye;
When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once!) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She combed its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.
She sighed, she looked up through the clear green sea;
She said: 'I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little gray church on the shore to-day.
'T will be Easter-time in the world, ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, merman! here with thee.'
I said: 'Go up, dear heart, through the waves: —
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves!'
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?
'The sea grows stormy: the little ones moan: —
Long prayers,' I said, 'in the world they say;
Come!' I said; and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-walled town;
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still,
To the little gray church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.
We climbed on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded panes.
She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:
'Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here!
Dear heart,' I said, 'we are long alone:
The sea grows stormy; the little ones moan.'
But, ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were sealed to the holy book.
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more!
Come away, come down, call no more!

Down, down, down!
Down to the depths of the sea —
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings: 'O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy!
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessèd light of the sun!'
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare:
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden;
A long, long sigh
For the cold strange eyes of a little mermaiden
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away, children;
Come children, come down! —
The hoarse wind blows coldly;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing: 'Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she!
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea.'
But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starred with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanched sands a gloom;
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks, we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town;
At the church on the hill-side:
And then come back down,
Singing: 'There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she!
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea.'

(1849)

THE BURIED LIFE

Light flows our war of mocking words, and yet,
Behold, with tears mine eyes are wet!
I feel a nameless sadness o'er me roll.
Yes, yes, we know that we can jest,
We know, we know that we can smile!
But there's a something in this breast,
To which thy light words bring no rest,
And thy gay smiles no anodyne.
Give me thy hand, and hush awhile,
And turn those limpid eyes on mine,
And let me read there, love! thy inmost soul.

Alas! is even love too weak
To unlock the heart, and let it speak?
Are even lovers powerless to reveal
To one another what indeed they feel?
I knew the mass of men concealed
Their thoughts, for fear that if revealed
They would by other men be met
With blank indifference, or with blame reproved;
I knew they lived and moved
Tricked in disguises, alien to the rest
Of men, and alien to themselves — and yet
The same heart beats in every human breast!

But we, my love! — doth a like spell benumb
Our hearts, our voices? — must we too be dumb?

Ah! well for us, if even we,
Even for a moment, can get free
Our heart, and have our lips unchained;
For that which seals them hath been deep-ordained!

Fate, which foresaw
How frivolous a baby man would be —
By what distractions he would be possessed,
How he would pour himself in every strife,
And well-nigh change his own identity —
That it might keep from his capricious play
His genuine self, and force him to obey
Even in his own despite his being's law,
Bade through the deep recesses of our breast
The unregarded river of our life
Pursue with indiscernible flow its way;
And that we should not see
The buried stream, and seem to be
Eddying at large in blind uncertainty,
Though driving on with it eternally.

But often, in the world's most crowded streets,
But often, in the din of strife,
There rises an unspeakable desire
After the knowledge of our buried life;
A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
In tracking out our true, original course;
A longing to inquire
Into the mystery of this heart which beats
So wild, so deep in us — to know
Whence our lives come and where they go.
And many a man in his own breast then delves,
But deep enough, alas! none ever mines.
And we have been on many thousand lines,
And we have shown, on each, spirit and power;
But hardly have we, for one little hour,
Been on our own line, have we been ourselves —
Hardly had skill to utter one of all
The nameless feelings that course through our breast,
But they course on for ever unexpressed,
And long we try in vain to speak and act
Our hidden self, and what we say and do
Is eloquent, is well — but 't is not true!
And then we will no more be racked
With inward striving, and demand,
Of all the thousand nothings of the hour
Their stupefying power;
Ah, yes, and they benumb us at our call!
Yet still, from time to time, vague and forlorn,
From the soul's subterranean depth upborne
As from an infinitely distant land,
Come airs, and floating echoes, and convey
A melancholy into all our day.

Only — but this is rare —
When a beloved hand is laid in ours,
When, jaded with the rush and glare
Of the interminable hours,
Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,
When our world-deafened ear
Is by the tones of a loved voice caressed —
A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,
And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again.
The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies plain,
And what we mean, we say, and what we would, we know.
A man becomes aware of his life's flow,
And hears its winding murmur; and he sees
The meadows where it glides, the sun, the breeze.

And there arrives a lull in the hot race
Wherein he doth for ever chase
That flying and elusive shadow, rest.
An air of coolness plays upon his face,
And an unwonted calm pervades his breast.
And then he thinks he knows
The hills where his life rose,
And the sea where it goes.

(1852)

SELF-DEPENDENCE

Weary of myself, and sick of asking
What I am, and what I ought to be,
At this vessel's prow I stand, which bears me
Forwards, forwards, o'er the starlit sea.

And a look of passionate desire
O'er the sea and to the stars I send:
'Ye who from my childhood up have calmed me,
Calm me, ah, compose me to the end!

'Ah, once more,' I cried, 'ye stars, ye waters,
On my heart your mighty charm renew;
Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,
Feel my soul becoming vast like you!'

From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of heaven,
Over the lit sea's unquiet way,
In the rustling night-air came the answer:
'Wouldst thou *be* as these are? *Live* as they.

'Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
Undistracted by the sights they see,
These demand not that the things without them
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.

'And with joy the stars perform their shining,
And the sea its long moon-silvered roll;
For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting
All the fever of some differing soul.

'Bounded by themselves, and unregardful
In what state God's other works may be,
In their own tasks all their powers pouring,
These attain the mighty life you see.'

O air-born voice! long since, severely clear,
A cry like thine in mine own heart I hear:
'Resolve to be thyself; and know that he,
Who finds himself, loses his misery!'

(1852)

MORALITY

We cannot kindle when we will
The fire which in the heart resides;
The spirit bloweth and is still,
In mystery our soul abides.
But tasks in hours of insight willed,
Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled.

With aching hands and bleeding feet
We dig and heap, lay stone on stone;
We bear the burden and the heat
Of the long day, and wish 't were done.
Not till the hours of light return,
All we have built do we discern.

Then, when the clouds are off the soul,
When thou dost bask in Nature's eye,
Ask, how *she* viewed thy self-control,
Thy struggling, tasked morality —
Nature, whose free, light, cheerful air,
Oft made thee, in thy gloom, despair.

And she, whose censure thou dost dread,
Whose eye thou wast afraid to seek,
See, on her face a glow is spread,
A strong emotion on her cheek!
'Ah, child!' she cries, 'that strife divine,
Whence was it, for it is not mine?

'There is no effort on *my* brow —
I do not strive, I do not weep;
I rush with the swift spheres and glow
In joy, and when I will, I sleep.
Yet that severe, that earnest air,
I saw, I felt it once — but where?

'I knew not yet the gauge of time,
Nor wore the manacles of space;
I felt it in some other clime,
I saw it in some other place.
'T was when the heavenly house I trod,
And lay upon the breast of God.'

(1852)

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

AN EPISODE

And the first gray of morning filled the east,
And the fog rose out of the Oxus stream.
But all the Tartar camp along the stream
Was hushed, and still the men were plunged in sleep;
Sohrab alone, he slept not: all night long
He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed;
But when the gray dawn stole into his tent,
He rose, and clad himself, and girt his sword,
And took his horseman's cloak, and left his tent,
And went abroad into the cold wet fog,

Through the dim camp to Peran-Wisa's tent.
Through the black Tartar tents he passed, which stood
Clustering like bee-hives on the low flat strand
Of Oxus, where the summer floods o'erflow
When the sun melts the snows in high Pamere:
Through the black tents he passed, o'er that low strand,
And to a hillock came, a little back
From the stream's brink, the spot where first a boat,
Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the land.
The men of former times had crowned the top
With a clay fort: but that was fall'n; and now
The Tartars built there Peran-Wisa's tent,
A dome of laths, and o'er it felts were spread.
And Sohrab came there, and went in, and stood
Upon the thick-piled carpets in the tent,
And found the old man sleeping on his bed
Of rugs and felts, and near him lay his arms.
And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the step
Was dulled; for he slept light, an old man's sleep;
And he rose quickly on one arm, and said:
'Who art thou? for it is not yet clear dawn.
Speak! is there news, or any night alarm?'
But Sohrab came to the bedside, and said:
'Thou knowest me, Peran-Wisa: it is I.
The sun is not yet risen, and the foe
Sleep; but I sleep not; all night long I lie
Tossing and wakeful, and I come to thee.
For so did King Afrasiab bid me seek
Thy counsel, and to heed thee as thy son,
In Samarcand, before the army marched;
And I will tell thee what my heart desires.
Thou know'st if, since from Ader-baijan, first
I came among the Tartars, and bore arms,
I have still served Afrasiab well, and shown,
At my boy's years, the courage of a man.
This too thou know'st, that, while I still bear on
The conquering Tartar ensigns through the world,
And beat the Persians back on every field,
I see one man, one man, and one alone —
Rustum, my father; who, I hoped, should greet,
Should one day greet, upon some well-fought field,
His not unworthy, not inglorious son.
So I long hoped, but him I never find.
Come then, hear now, and grant me what I ask.
Let the two armies rest to-day: but I
Will challenge forth the bravest Persian lords
To meet me, man to man; if I prevail,
Rustum will surely hear it; if I fall —
Old man, the dead need no one, claim no kin.
Dim is the rumor of a common fight,
Where host meets host, and many names are sunk:
But of a single combat Fame speaks clear.'
He spoke: and Peran-Wisa took the hand
Of the young man in his, and sighed, and said:
'O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine!
Canst thou not rest among the Tartar chiefs,
And share the battle's common chance with us
Who love thee, but must press forever first,
In single fight incurring single risk,
To find a father thou hast never seen?
That were far best, my son, to stay with us
Unmurmuring; in our tents, while it is war,
And when 'tis truce, then in Afrasiab's towns.
But, if this one desire indeed rules all,
To seek out Rustum — seek him not through fight:
Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,
O Sohrab, carry an unwounded son!
But far hence seek him, for he is not here,
For now it is not as when I was young,
When Rustum was in front of every fray:
But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,
In Seïstan, with Zal, his father old.
Whether that his own mighty strength at last
Feels the abhorred approaches of old age;
Or in some quarrel with the Persian King.
There go: — Thou wilt not? Yet my heart forebodes
Danger of death awaits thee on this field.
Fain would I know thee safe and well, though lost
To us: fain therefore send thee hence, in peace

To seek thy father, not seek single fights
In vain: — but who can keep the lion's cub
From ravening? and who govern Rustum's son?
Go: I will grant thee what thy heart desires.'
So said he, and dropped Sohrab's hand, and left
His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay,
And o'er his chilly limbs his woolen coat
He passed, and tied his sandals on his feet,
And threw a white cloak round him, and he took
In his right hand a ruler's staff, no sword;
And on his head he set his sheep-skin cap,
Black, glossy, curled, the fleece of Kara-Kul;
And raised the curtain of his tent, and called
His herald to his side, and went abroad.
The sun, by this, had risen, and cleared the fog
From the broad Oxus and the glittering sands:
And from their tents the Tartar horsemen filed
Into the open plain; so Haman bade;
Haman, who next to Peran-Wisa ruled
The host, and still was in his lusty prime.
From their black tents, long files of horse, they streamed:
As when, some gray November morn, the files,
In marching order spread, of long-necked cranes,
Stream over Casbin, and the southern slopes
Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries,
Or some frore Caspian reed-bed, southward bound
For the warm Persian sea-board: so they streamed.
The Tartars of the Oxus, the King's guard,
First, with black sheep-skin caps and with long spears;
Large men, large steeds; who from Bokhara come
And Khiva, and ferment the milk of mares.
Next, the more temperate Toorkmuns of the south,
The Tukas, and the lances of Salore,
And those from Attruck and the Caspian sands;
Light men, and on light steeds, who only drink
The acrid milk of camels, and their wells.
And then a swarm of wandering horse, who came
From far, and a more doubtful service owned;
The Tartars of Ferghana, from the banks
Of the Jaxartes, men with scanty beards
And close-set skull-caps; and those wilder hordes
Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern waste,
Kalmuks and unkempt Kuzzaks, tribes who stray
Nearest the Pole, and wandering Kirghizzes,
Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere.
These all filed out from camp into the plain.
And on the other side the Persians formed:
First a light cloud of horse, Tartars they seemed,
The Ilyats of Khorassan: and behind,
The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,
Marshaled battalions bright in burnished steel.
But Peran-Wisa with his herald came
Threading the Tartar squadrons to the front,
And with his staff kept back the foremost ranks.
And when Ferood, who led the Persians, saw
That Peran-Wisa kept the Tartars back,
He took his spear, and to the front he came,
And checked his ranks, and fixed them where they stood.
And the old Tartar came upon the sand
Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and said:
'Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars, hear!
Let there be truce between the hosts to-day.
But choose a champion from the Persian lords
To fight our champion Sohrab, man to man.'
As, in the country, on a morn in June,
When the dew glistens on the pearlèd ears,
A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy —
So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa said,
A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran
Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they loved.
But as a troop of peddlers, from Cabool,
Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,
That vast sky-neighboring mountain of milk snow;
Crossing so high, that, as they mount, they pass
Long flocks of traveling birds dead on the snow,

Choked by the air, and scarce can they themselves
Slake their parched throats with sugared mulberries —
In single file they move, and stop their breath,
For fear they should dislodge the o'erhanging snows —
So the pale Persians held their breath with fear.
And to Ferood his brother chiefs came up
To counsel. Gudurz and Zoarrah came,
And Feraburz, who ruled the Persian host
Second, and was the uncle of the King:
These came and counseled; and then Gudurz said:
'Ferood, shame bids us take their challenge up,
Yet champion have we none to match this youth.
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.
But Rustum came last night; aloof he sits
And sullen, and has pitched his tents apart:
Him will I seek, and carry to his ear
The Tartar challenge, and this young man's name.
Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight,
Stand forth the while, and take their challenge up.'
So spake he; and Ferood stood forth and cried:
'Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said.
Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man.'
He spake; and Peran-Wisa turned, and strode
Back through the opening squadrons to his tent.
But through the anxious Persians Gudurz ran,
And crossed the camp which lay behind, and reached,
Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tents.
Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering gay,
Just pitched: the high pavilion in the midst
Was Rustum's, and his men lay camped around.
And Gudurz entered Rustum's tent, and found
Rustum: his morning meal was done, but still
The table stood before him, charged with food —
A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,
And dark green melons; and there Rustum sate
Listless, and held a falcon on his wrist,
And played with it; but Gudurz came and stood
Before him; and he looked, and saw him stand;
And with a cry sprang up, and dropped the bird,
And greeted Gudurz with both hands, and said:
'Welcome! these eyes could see no better sight.
What news? but sit down first, and eat and drink.'
But Gudurz stood in the tent-door, and said:
'Not now: a time will come to eat and drink,
But not to-day: to-day has other needs.
The armies are drawn out, and stand at gaze:
For from the Tartars is a challenge brought
To pick a champion from the Persian lords
To fight their champion — and thou know'st his name —
Sohrab men call him, but his birth is hid.
O Rustum, like thy might is this young man's!
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.
And he is young, and Iran's chiefs are old,
Or else too weak; and all eyes turn to thee.
Come down and help us, Rustum, or we lose.'
He spoke: but Rustum answered with a smile: —
'Go to! if Iran's chiefs are old, then I
Am older: if the young are weak, the king
Errs strangely: for the king, for Kai-Khosroo,
Himself is young, and honors younger men,
And lets the aged molder to their graves.
Rustum he loves no more, but loves the young —
The young may rise at Sohrab's vaunts, not I.
For what care I, though all speak Sohrab's fame?
For would that I myself had such a son,
And not that one slight helpless girl I have,
A son so famed, so brave, to send to war,
And I to tarry with the snow-haired Zal,
My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,
And clip his borders short, and drive his herds,

And he has none to guard his weak old age.
There would I go, and hang my armor up,
And with my great name fence that weak old man,
And spend the goodly treasures I have got,
And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,
And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings,
And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no more.'
He spoke, and smiled; and Gudurz made reply:
'What then, O Rustum, will men say to this,
When Sohrab dares our bravest forth, and seeks,
Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he seeks,
Hidest thy face? Take heed, lest men should say,
"Like some old miser, Rustum hoards his fame,
And shuns to peril it with younger men."'
And, greatly moved, then Rustum made reply:
'O Gudurz, wherefore dost thou say such words?
Thou knowest better words than this to say.
What is one more, one less, obscure or famed,
Valiant or craven, young or old, to me?
Are not they mortal, am not I myself?
But who for men of naught would do great deeds?
Come, thou shall see how Rustum hoards his fame.
But I will fight unknown, and in plain arms;
Let not men say of Rustum, he was matched
In single fight with any mortal man.'
He spoke, and frowned; and Gudurz turned, and ran
Back quickly through the camp in fear and joy,
Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came.
But Rustum strode to his tent-door, and called
His followers in, and bade them bring his arms,
And clad himself in steel: the arms he chose
Were plain, and on his shield was no device,
Only his helm was rich, inlaid with gold,
And from the fluted spine atop, a plume
Of horsehair waved, a scarlet horsehair plume.
So armed, he issued forth; and Ruksh, his horse,
Followed him, like a faithful hound, at heel,
Ruksh, whose renown was noised through all the earth,
The horse, whom Rustum on a foray once
Did in Bokhara by the river find
A colt beneath its dam, and drove him home,
And reared him; a bright bay, with lofty crest,
Dight with a saddle-cloth of broidered green
Crusted with gold, and on the ground were worked
All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunters know:
So followed, Rustum left his tents, and crossed
The camp, and to the Persian host appeared.
And all the Persians knew him, and with shouts
Hailed; but the Tartars knew not who he was.
And dear as the wet diver to the eyes
Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore,
By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,
Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,
Having made up his tale of precious pearls,
Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands — 289
So dear to the pale Persians Rustum came.
And Rustum to the Persian front advanced,
And Sohrab armed in Haman's tent, and came.
And as afield the reapers cut a swath
Down through the middle of a rich man's corn,
And on each side are squares of standing corn,
And in the midst a stubble, short and bare;
So on each side were squares of men, with spears
Bristling, and in the midst, the open sand.
And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast
His eyes toward the Tartar tents, and saw
Sohrab come forth, and eyed him as he came.
As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,
Eyes through her silken curtains the poor drudge
Who with numb blackened fingers makes her fire —
At cock-crow on a starlit winter's morn,

When the frost flowers the whitened window-panes —
And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts
Of that poor drudge may be; so Rustum eyed
The unknown adventurous youth, who from afar
Came seeking Rustum, and defying forth
All the most valiant chiefs: long he perused
His spirited air, and wondered who he was.
For very young he seemed, tenderly reared;
Like some young cypress, tall, and dark, and straight,
Which in a queen's secluded garden throws
Its slight dark shadow on the moonlit turf,
By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's sound —
So slender Sohrab seemed, so softly reared.
And a deep pity entered Rustum's soul
As he beheld him coming; and he stood,
And beckoned to him with his hand, and said:
'O thou young man, the air of heaven is soft,
And warm, and pleasant; but the grave is cold.
Heaven's air is better than the cold dead grave.
Behold he: I am vast, and clad in iron,
And tried; and I have stood on many a field
Of blood, and I have fought with many a foe:
Never was that field lost, or that foe saved.
O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on death?
Be governed: quit the Tartar host, and come
To Iran, and be as my son to me,
And fight beneath my banner till I die.
There are no youths in Iran brave as thou.'
So he spake, mildly: Sohrab heard his voice,
The mighty voice of Rustum; and he saw
His giant figure planted on the sand,
Sole, like some single tower, which a chief
Hath builded on the waste in former years
Against the robbers; and he saw that head,
Streaked with its first gray hairs: hope filled his soul;
And he ran forwards and embraced his knees,
And clasped his hand within his own and said:
'Oh, by thy father's head! by thine own soul!
Art thou not Rustum? Speak! art thou not he?'

But Rustum eyed askance the kneeling youth,
And turned away, and spake to his own soul:
'Ah me, I muse what this young fox may mean.
False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys.
For if I now confess this thing he asks,
And hide it not, but say, "Rustum is here,"
He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes,
But he will find some pretext not to fight,
And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts,
A belt or sword perhaps, and go his way.
And on a feast-day, in Afrasiab's hall,
In Samarcand, he will arise and cry —
"I challenged once, when the two armies camped
Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords
To cope with me in single fight; but they
Shrank; only Rustum dared: then he and I
Changed gifts, and went on equal terms away."
So will he speak, perhaps, while men applaud.
Then were the chiefs of Iran shamed through me.'
And then he turned, and sternly spake aloud:
'Rise! wherefore dost thou vainly question thus
Of Rustum? I am here, whom thou hast called
By challenge forth: make good thy vaunt, or yield.
Is it with Rustum only thou wouldst fight?
Rash boy, men look on Rustum's face and flee.
For well I know, that did great Rustum stand
Before thy face this day, and were revealed,
There would be then no talk of fighting more.
But being what I am, I tell thee this:
Do thou record it in thine inmost soul:
Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt, and yield;
Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds
Bleach them, or Oxus with his summer floods,
Oxus in summer wash them all away.'
He spoke: and Sohrab answered, on his feet: —
'Art thou so fierce? Thou wilt not fright me so.
I am no girl, to be made pale by words.

Yet this thou hast said well, did Rustum stand
Here on this field, there were no fighting then.
But Rustum is far hence, and we stand here.
Begin: thou art more vast, more dread than I,
And thou art proved, I know, and I am young —
But yet success sways with the breath of heaven.
And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure
Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know.
For we are all, like swimmers in the sea,
Poised on the top of a huge wave of Fate,
Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall.
And whether it will heave us up to land,
Or whether it will roll us out to sea,
Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,
We know not, and no search will make us know:
Only the event will teach us in its hour.'
He spoke; and Rustum answered not, but hurled
His spear: down from the shoulder, down it came
As on some partridge in the corn a hawk
That long has towered in the airy clouds
Drops like a plummet: Sohrab saw it come,
And sprang aside, quick as a flash: the spear
Hissed, and went quivering down into the sand,
Which it sent flying wide: — then Sohrab threw
In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield: sharp rang
The iron plates rang sharp, but turned the spear.
And Rustum seized his club, which none but he
Could wield: an unlopped trunk it was, and huge,
Still rough; like those which men in treeless plains
To build them boats fish from the flooded rivers,
Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when, high up
By their dark springs, the wind in winter-time
Has made in Himalayan forests wrack,
And strewn the channels with torn boughs; so huge
The club which Rustum lifted now, and struck
One stroke; but again Sohrab sprang aside
Lithe as the glancing snake, and the club came
Thundering to earth, and leapt from Rustum's hand.
And Rustum followed his own blow, and fell
To his knees, and with his fingers clutched the sand:
And now might Sohrab have unsheathed his sword,
And pierced the mighty Rustum while he lay
Dizzy, and on his knees, and choked with sand:
But he looked on, and smiled, nor bared his sword,
But courteously drew back, and spoke, and said:
'Thou strik'st too hard: that club of thine will float
Upon the summer-floods, and not my bones.
But rise, and be not wroth; not wroth am I:
No, when I see thee, wrath forsakes my soul.
Thou say'st thou art not Rustum: be it so.
Who art thou then, that canst so touch my soul?
Boy as I am, I have seen battles too;
Have waded foremost in their bloody waves,
And heard their hollow roar of dying men;
But never was my heart thus touched before.
Are they from heaven, these softenings of the heart?
O thou old warrior, let us yield to heaven!
Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,
And make a truce, and sit upon this sand,
And pledge each other in red wine, like friends,
And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's deeds.
There are enough foes in the Persian host
Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang;
Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou
Mayst fight; fight them, when they confront thy spear.
But oh, let there be peace 'twixt thee and me!'
He ceased: but while he spake, Rustum had risen,
And stood erect, trembling with rage: his club

He left to lie, but had regained his spear,
Whose fiery point now in his mailed right-hand
Blazed bright and baleful, like that autumn star,
The baleful sign of fevers: dust had soiled
His stately crest, and dimmed his glittering arms.
His breast heaved; his lips foamed; and twice his voice
Was choked with rage: at last these words broke way:
'Girl! nimble with thy feet, not with thy hands!
Curled minion, dancer, coiner of sweet words!
Fight; let me hear thy hateful voice no more!
Thou art not in Afrasiab's gardens now
With Tartar girls, with whom thou art wont to dance;
But on the Oxus sands, and in the dance
Of battle, and with me, who make no play
Of war: I fight it out, and hand to hand.
Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and wine!
Remember all thy valor; try thy feints
And cunning: all the pity I had is gone:
Because thou hast shamed me before both the hosts
With thy light skipping tricks, and thy girl's wiles.'
He spoke: and Sohrab kindled at his taunts,
And he too drew his sword: at once they rushed
Together, as two eagles on one prey
Come rushing down together from the clouds,
One from the east, one from the west: their shields
Dashed with a clang together, and a din
Rose, such as that the sinewy woodcutters
Make often in the forest's heart at morn,
Of hewing axes, crashing trees: such blows
Rustum and Sohrab on each other hailed.
And you would say that sun and stars took part
In that unnatural conflict; for a cloud
Grew suddenly in heaven, and darked the sun
Over the fighters' heads; and a wind rose
Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,
And in a sandy whirlwind wrapped the pair.
In gloom they twain were wrapped, and they alone;
For both the on-looking hosts on either hand
Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,
And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream.
But in the gloom they fought, with bloodshot eyes
And laboring breath; first Rustum struck the shield
Which Sohrab held stiff out: the steel-spiked spear
Rent the tough plates, but failed to reach the skin,
And Rustum plucked it back with angry groan.
Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helm,
Nor clove its steel quite through; but all the crest
He shore away, and that proud horsehair plume,
Never till now defiled, sank to the dust;
And Rustum bowed his head; but then the gloom
Grew blacker: thunder rumbled in the air,
And lightnings rent the cloud; and Ruksh, the horse,
Who stood at hand, uttered a dreadful cry:
No horse's cry was that, most like the roar
Of some pained desert lion, who all day
Hath trailed the hunter's javelin in his side,
And comes at night to die upon the sand:
The two hosts heard that cry, and quaked for fear,
And Oxus curdled as it crossed his stream.
But Sohrab heard, and quailed not, but rushed on,
And struck again; and again Rustum bowed
His head; but this time all the blade, like glass,
Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,
And in his hand the hilt remained alone.
Then Rustum raised his head; his dreadful eyes
Glared, and he shook on high his menacing spear,
And shouted, 'Rustum!' Sohrab heard that shout,
And shrank amazed: back he recoiled one step,
And scanned with blinking eyes the advancing form:
And then he stood bewildered; and he dropped
His covering shield, and the spear pierced his side.

He reeled, and staggering back, sank to the ground.
And then the gloom dispersed, and the wind fell,
And the bright sun broke forth, and melted all
The cloud; and the two armies saw the pair;
Saw Rustum standing, safe upon his feet,
And Sohrab, wounded, on the bloody sand.
Then with a bitter smile, Rustum began:
'Sohrab, thou thoughtest in thy mind to kill
A Persian lord this day, and strip his corpse,
And bear thy trophies to Afrasiab's tent.
Or else that the great Rustum would come down
Himself to fight, and that thy wiles would move
His heart to take a gift, and let thee go.
And then that all the Tartar host would praise
Thy courage or thy craft, and spread thy fame,
To glad thy father in his weak old age.
Fool! thou art slain, and by an unknown man!
Dearer to the red jackals shalt thou be,
Than to thy friends, and to thy father old.'
And, with a fearless mien, Sohrab replied:
'Unknown thou art; yet thy fierce vaunt is vain.
Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful man!
No! Rustum slays me, and this filial heart.
For were I matched with ten such men as thee,
And I were he who till to-day I was,
They should be lying here, I standing there.
But that beloved name unnerved my arm —
That name, and something, I confess, in thee,
Which troubles all my heart, and made my shield
Fall; and thy spear transfixed an unarmed foe,
And now thou boastest, and insult'st my fate.
But hear thou this, fierce man, tremble to hear!
The mighty Rustum shall avenge my death!
My father, whom I seek through all the world,
He shall avenge my death, and punish thee!'
As when some hunter in the spring hath found
A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,
Upon the craggy isle of a hill-lake,
And pierced her with an arrow as she rose,
And followed her to find her where she fell
Far off; — anon her mate comes winging back
From hunting, and a great way off descries
His huddling young left sole; at that, he checks
His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps
Circles above his eyry, with loud screams
Chiding his mate back to her nest; but she
Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,
In some far stony gorge out of his ken,
A heap of fluttering feathers: never more
Shall the lake glass her, flying over it;
Never the black and dripping precipices
Echo her stormy scream as she sails by: —
As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss —
So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood
Over his dying son, and knew him not.
But with a cold, incredulous voice, he said:
'What prate is this of fathers and revenge?
The mighty Rustum never had a son.'
And, with a failing voice, Sohrab replied:
'Ah, yes, he had! and that lost son am I.
Surely the news will one day reach his ear,
Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries long,
Somewhere, I know not where, but far from here;
And pierce him like a stab, and make him leap
To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee.
Fierce man, bethink thee, for an only son!
What will that grief, what will that vengeance be!
Oh, could I live, till I that grief had seen!
Yet him I pity not so much, but her,
My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells
With that old king, her father, who grows gray
With age, and rules over the valiant Koords.
Her most I pity, who no more will see
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,
With spoils and honor, when the war is done.
But a dark rumor will be bruited up,
From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear;
And then will that defenceless woman learn
That Sohrab will rejoice her sight no more;
But that in battle with a nameless foe,
By the far distant Oxus, he is slain.'

He spoke; and as he ceased he wept aloud,
Thinking of her he left, and his own death.
He spoke; but Rustum listened, plunged in thought.
Nor did he yet believe it was his son
Who spoke, although he called back names he knew;
For he had had sure tidings that the babe,
Which was in Ader-baijan born to him,
Had been a puny girl, no boy at all:
So that sad mother sent him word, for fear
Rustum should seek the boy, to train in arms;
And so he deemed that either Sohrab took,
By a false boast, the style of Rustum's son;
Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame.
So deemed he; yet he listened, plunged in thought;
And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide
Of the bright rocking ocean sets to shore
At the full moon: tears gathered in his eyes;
For he remembered his own early youth,
And all its bounding rapture; as, at dawn,
The shepherd from his mountain-lodge descries
A far, bright city, smitten by the sun,
Through many rolling clouds; — so Rustum saw
His youth; saw Sohrab's mother, in her bloom;
And that old king, her father, who loved well
His wandering guest, and gave him his fair child
With joy; and all the pleasant life they led,
They three, in that long-distant summer-time —
The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt
And hound, and morn on those delightful hills
In Ader-baijan. And he saw that youth,
Of age and looks to be his own dear son,
Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,
Like some rich hyacinth, which by the scythe
Of an unskilful gardener has been cut,
Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,
And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,
On the mown, dying grass; — so Sohrab lay,
Lovely in death, upon the common sand.
And Rustum gazed on him with grief, and said: —

'O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son
Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have loved!
Yet here thou errest, Sohrab, or else men
Have told thee false; — thou art not Rustum's son.
For Rustum had no son: one child he had —
But one — a girl: who with her mother now
Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us —
Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war.'

But Sohrab answered him in wrath; for now
The anguish of the deep-fixed spear grew fierce,
And he desirèd to draw forth the steel,
And let the blood flow free, and so to die;
But first he would convince his stubborn foe —
And, rising sternly on one arm, he said:

'Man, who art thou who dost deny my words?
Truth sits upon the lips of dying men,
And falsehood, while I lived, was far from mine.
I tell thee, pricked upon this arm I bear
That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,
That she might prick it on the babe she bore.'

He spoke: and all the blood left Rustum's cheeks;
And his knees tottered, and he smote his hand,
Against his breast, his heavy mailèd hand,
That the hard iron corslet clanked aloud:
And on his heart he pressed the other hand,
And in a hollow voice he spake, and said:

'Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie.
If thou show this, then art thou Rustum's son.'

Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loosed
His belt, and near the shoulder bared his arm,
And showed a sign in faint vermilion points
Pricked: as a cunning workman, in Pekin,
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,
An emperor's gift — at early morn he paints,
And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp
Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands: —
So delicately pricked the sign appeared

On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal.
It was that Griffin, which of old reared Zal,
Rustum's great father, whom they left to die,
A helpless babe, among the mountain rocks.
Him that kind creature found, and reared, and loved —
Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.
And Sohrab bared that image on his arm,
And himself scanned it long with mournful eyes,
And then he touched it with his hand and said:
'How say'st thou? Is that sign the proper sign
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's?'
He spoke: but Rustum gazed, and gazed, and stood
Speechless; and then he uttered one sharp cry —
'O boy — thy father!' — and his voice choked there.
And then a dark cloud passed before his eyes,
And his head swam, and he sank down to earth.
But Sohrab crawled to where he lay, and cast
His arms about his neck, and kissed his lips,
And with fond faltering fingers stroked his cheeks,
Trying to call him back to life: and life
Came back to Rustum, and he oped his eyes,
And they stood wide with horror; and he seized
In both his hands the dust which lay around,
And threw it on his head, and smirched his hair,
His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms:
And strong convulsive groanings shook his breast,
And his sobs choked him; and he clutched his sword,
To draw it, and forever let life out.
But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands,
And with a soothing voice he spake, and said:
'Father, forbear: for I but meet to-day
The doom that at my birth was written down
In heaven, and thou art heaven's unconscious hand.
Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,
When first I saw thee; and thy heart spoke too,
I know it: but Fate trod those promptings down
Under its iron heel; Fate, Fate engaged
The strife, and hurled me on my father's spear.
But let us speak no more of this: I find
My father; let me feel that I have found.
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,
And wash them with thy tears, and say: "My son!"
Quick! quick! for numbered are my sands of life,
And swift; for like the lightning to this field
I came, and like the wind I go away —
Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind.
But it was writ in heaven that this should be.'
So said he: and his voice released the heart
Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth; he cast
His arms round his son's neck, and wept aloud,
And kissed him. And awe fell on both the hosts
When they saw Rustum's grief: and Ruksh, the horse,
With his head bowing to the ground, and mane
Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe
First to the one, then to the other moved
His head, as if inquiring what their grief
Might mean; and from his dark, compassionate eyes,
The big warm tears rolled down, and caked the sand.
But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and said:
'Ruksh, now thou grievest; but O Ruksh, thy feet
Should first have rotted on their nimble joints,
When first they bore thy master to this field.'
But Sohrab looked upon the horse and said:
'Is this then Ruksh? How often, in past days,
My mother told me of thee, thou brave steed!

My terrible father's terrible horse; and said,
That I should one day find thy lord and thee.
Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane.
O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I;
For thou hast gone where I shall never go,
And snuffed the breezes of my father's home.
And thou hast trod the sands of Seïstan,
And seen the river of Helmund, and the Lake
Of Zirrah; and the agèd Zal himself
Has often stroked thy neck, and given thee food,
Corn in a golden platter soaked with wine,
And said—"O Ruksh! bear Rustum well!"—but I
Have never known my grandsire's furrowed face,
Nor seen his lofty house in Seïstan,
Nor slaked my thirst at the clear Helmund stream:
But lodged among my father's foes, and seen
Afrasiab's cities only, Samarcand,
Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,
And the black Toorkmun tents; and only drunk
The desert rivers, Moorghab and Tejend,
Kohik, and where the Kalmuks feed their sheep,
The northern Sir; and this great Oxus stream—
The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die.'
And, with a heavy groan, Rustum bewailed:
'Oh, that its waves were flowing over me!
Oh, that I saw its grains of yellow silt
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head!'
And, with a grave mild voice, Sohrab replied:
'Desire not that, my father: thou must live.
For some are born to do great deeds, and live,
As some are born to be obscured, and die.
Do thou the deeds I die too young to do,
And reap a second glory in thine age.
Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.
But come: thou seest this great host of men
Which follow me; I pray thee, slay not these:
Let me entreat for them: what have they done?
They followed me, my hope, my fame, my star.
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.
But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,
But carry me with thee to Seïstan,
And place me on a bed, and mourn for me,
Thou, and the snow-haired Zal, and all thy friends.
And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above my bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all;
That so the passing horseman on the waste
May see my tomb a great way off, and cry:
"Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,
Whom his great father did in ignorance kill"—
And I be not forgotten in my grave.'
And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied:—
'Fear not; as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,
So shall it be; for I will burn my tents
And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me,
And carry thee away to Seïstan.
And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee,
With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends,
And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above thy bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all:
And men shall not forget thee in thy grave.
And I will spare thy host: yea, let them go:
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.
What should I do with slaying any more?
For would that all whom I have ever slain
Might be once more alive; my bitterest foes,
And they who were called champions in their time,
And through whose death I won that fame I have;
And I were nothing but a common man,
A poor, mean soldier, and without renown;
So thou mightest live too, my son, my son!
Or rather would that I, even I myself,
Might now be lying on this bloody sand,
Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of thine,
Not thou of mine; and I might die, not thou;
And I, not thou, be borne to Seïstan;
And Zal might weep above my grave, not thine;
And say—"O son, I weep thee not too sore,

For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end."
But now in blood and battles was my youth,
And full of blood and battles is my age;
And I shall never end this life of blood.'
Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied:
'A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful man!
But thou shalt yet have peace; only not now.
Not yet: but thou shalt have it on that day,
When thou shalt sail in a high-masted ship,
Thou and the other peers of Kai Khosroo,
Returning home over the salt blue sea,
From laying thy dear master in his grave.'
And Rustum gazed in Sohrab's face, and said:
'Soon be that day, my son, and deep that sea!
Till then, if fate so wills, let me endure.'
He spoke; and Sohrab smiled on him, and took
The spear, and drew it from his side, and eased
His wound's imperious anguish; but the blood
Came welling from the open gash, and life
Flowed with the stream; all down his cold white side
The crimson torrent ran, dim now and soiled,
Like the soiled tissue of white violets
Left, freshly gathered, on their native bank,
By children whom their nurses call with haste
Indoors from the sun's eye; his head drooped low,
His limbs grew slack: motionless, white, he lay,
White, with eyes closed, only when heavy gasps,
Deep heavy gasps, quivering through all his frame,
Convulsed him back to life, he opened them.
And fixed them feebly on his father's face;
Till now all strength was ebbed; and from his limbs
Unwillingly the spirit fled away,
Regretting the warm mansion which it left,
And youth, and bloom, and this delightful world,
So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead:
And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak
Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead son.
As those black granite pillars, once high-reared,
By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear
His house, now 'mid their broken flights of steps,
Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side:
So, in the sand, lay Rustum by his son.
And night came down over the solemn waste,
And the two gazing hosts, and that sole pair,
And darkened all; and a cold fog, with night,
Crept from the Oxus. Soon a hum arose,
As of a great assembly loosed, and fires
Began to twinkle through the fog; for now
Both armies moved to camp, and took their meal:
The Persians took it on the open sands
Southward, the Tartars, by the river marge:
And Rustum and his son were left alone.
But the majestic river floated on,
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,
Rejoicing, through the hushed Chorasmian waste,
Under the solitary moon: he flowed
Right for the polar star, past Orgunjè,
Brimming, and bright, and large; then sands began
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,
And split his currents, that for many a league
The shorn and parceled Oxus strains along
Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles;
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had,
In his high mountain-cradle in Pamere,
A foiled circuitous wanderer: till at last
The longed-for dash of waves is heard, and wide
His luminous home of waters opens, bright
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bathed stars
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.

(1853)

THE SCHOLAR GIPSY

Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill;
Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes:
No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,
Nor the cropped grasses, shoot another head.
But when the fields are still,

And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,
And only the white sheep are sometimes seen
Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanched green;
Come, shepherd, and again renew the quest.

Here, where the reaper was at work of late,
In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves
His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruise,
And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,
Then here, at noon, comes back his stores to use;
Here will I sit and wait,
While to my ear from uplands far away,
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne;
With distant cries of reapers in the corn —
All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screened is this nook o'er the high, half-reaped field,
And here till sun-down, shepherd, will I be.
Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
Pale blue convolvulus in tendrils creep;
And air-swept lindens yield
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
And bower me from the August sun with shade;
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers.

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book —
Come, let me read the oft-read tale again,
The story of that Oxford scholar poor,
Of shining parts and quick inventive brain,
Who, tired of knocking at preferment's door,
One summer-morn forsook
His friends, and went to learn the gipsy lore,
And roamed the world with that wild brotherhood,
And came, as most men deemed, to little good,
But came to Oxford and his friends no more.

But once, years after, in the country lanes,
Two scholars whom at college erst he knew,
Met him, and of his way of life enquired.
Whereat he answered, that the gipsy crew,
His mates, had arts to rule as they desired,
The workings of men's brains;
And they can bind them to what thoughts they will:
'And I,' he said, 'the secret of their art,
When fully learned, will to the world impart;
But it needs happy moments for this skill.'

This said, he left them, and returned no more,
But rumors hung about the country side
That the lost scholar long was seen to stray,
Seen by rare glimpses pensive and tongue-tied,
In hat of antique shape, and cloak of gray,
The same the gipsies wore.
Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring:
At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,
On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frocked boors
Had found him seated at their entering.

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would fly,
And I myself seem half to know thy looks,
And put the shepherds, wanderer, on thy trace;
And boys who in lone wheat fields scare the rooks
I ask if thou hast passed their quiet place;
Or in my boat I lie
Moored to the cool bank in the summer heats,

'Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,
And watch the warm green-muffled Cumner hills,
And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats.

For most, I know, thou lov'st retirèd ground.
Thee, at the ferry, Oxford riders blithe,
Returning home on summer nights, have met
Crossing the stripling Thames at Bablock-hithe,
Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,
As the punt's rope chops round:
And leaning backwards in a pensive dream,
And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers
Plucked in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream.

And then they land, and thou art seen no more.
Maidens who from the distant hamlets come
To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,
Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee roam,
Or cross a stile into the public way.
Oft thou hast given them store
Of flowers — the frail-leafed, white anemone —
Dark bluebells drenched with dews of summer eves —
And purple orchises with spotted leaves —
But none hath words she can report of thee.

And, above Godstow Bridge, when haytime's here
In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,
Men who through those wide fields of breezy grass
Where black-winged swallows haunt the glittering Thames,
To bathe in the abandoned lasher pass,
Have often passed thee near
Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown;
Marked thine outlandish garb, thy figure spare,
Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air;
But, when they came from bathing, thou wast gone.

At some lone homestead in the Cumner hills,
Where at her open door the housewife darns,
Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate
To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.
Children, who early range these slopes and late
For cresses from the rills,
Have known thee eying, all an April day,
The springing pastures and the feeding kine;
And marked thee, when the stars come out and shine,
Through the long dewy grass move slow away.

In Autumn, on the skirts of Bagley Wood —
Where most the gipsies by the turf-edged way
Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush you see
With scarlet patches tagged and shreds of gray,
Above the forest-ground called Thessaly —
The blackbird picking food.
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all;
So often has he known thee past him stray,
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a withered spray,
And waiting for the spark from heaven to fall.

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill
Where home through flooded fields foot-travelers go,
Have I not passed thee on the wooden bridge
Wrapt in thy cloak and battling with the snow,
Thy face toward Hinskey and its wintry ridge?
And thou hast climbed the hill,
And gained the white brow of the Cumner range,
Turned once to watch, while thick the snowflakes fall,

The line of festal light in Christ Church hall —
Then sought thy straw in some sequestered grange.

But what — I dream! Two hundred years are flown
Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,
And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe
That thou wert wandered from the studious walls
To learn strange arts, and join a gipsy tribe:
And thou from earth art gone
Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid;
Some country nook, where o'er thy unknown grave
Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave —
Under a dark red-fruited, yew-tree's shade.

— No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours,
For what wears out the life of mortal men?
'T is that from change to change their being rolls:
'T is that repeated shocks, again, again,
Exhaust the energy of strongest souls,
And numb the elastic powers.
Till having used our nerves with bliss and teen,
And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,
To the just-pausing Genius we remit
Our worn-out life, and are — what we have been.

Thou hast not lived, why should'st thou perish, so?
Thou had'st *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire;
Else wert thou long since numbered with the dead —
Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire.
The generations of thy peers are fled,
And we ourselves shall go;
But thou possessest an immortal lot,
And we imagine thee exempt from age,
And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,
Because thou hadst — what we, alas, have not!

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,
Firm to their mark, not spent on other things;
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,
Which much to have tried, in much been baffled, brings.
O life unlike to ours!
Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,
And each half lives a hundred different lives;
Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope.

Thou waitest for the spark from heaven: and we,
Light half-believers of our casual creeds,
Who never deeply felt, nor clearly willed,
Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,
Whose vague resolves never have been fulfilled;
For whom each year we see
Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new;
Who hesitate and falter life away,
And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day —
Ah, do not we, wanderer, await it too?

Yes, we await it, but it still delays,
And then we suffer; and amongst us one,
Who most has suffered, takes dejectedly
His seat upon the intellectual throne;
And all his store of sad experience he
Lays bare of wretched days;
Tells us his misery's birth and growth and signs,
And how the dying spark of hope was fed,
And how the breast was soothed, and how the head,
And all his hourly varied anodynes.

This for our wisest: and we others pine,
And wish the long unhappy dream would end,
And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear
With close-lipped patience for our only friend,

Sad patience, too near neighbor to despair,
But none has hope like thine.
Thou through the fields and through the woods dost stray,
Roaming the country side, a truant boy,
Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,
And every doubt long blown by time away.

O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,
And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames;
Before this strange disease of modern life,
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its heads o'ertaxed, its palsied hearts, was rife—
Fly hence, our contact fear!
Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood!
Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern
From her false friend's approach in Hades turn,
Wave us away, and keep thy solitude.

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
Still clutching the inviolable shade,
With a free onward impulse brushing through,
By night, the silvered branches of the glade—
Far on the forest skirts, where none pursue,
On some mild pastoral slope
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales,
Freshen thy flowers, as in former years,
With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales.

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly,
For strong the infection of our mental strife,
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest;
And we should win thee from thy own fair life,
Like us distracted, and like us unblest.
Soon, soon thy cheer would die,
Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfixed thy powers,
And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made:
And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,
Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours.

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles!
—As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,
Descried at sunrise an emerging prow
Lifting the cool-haired creepers stealthily,
The fringes of a southward-facing brow
Among the Ægean isles;
And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,
Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,
Green bursting figs, and tunnies steeped in brine;
And knew the intruders on his ancient home,

The young light-hearted masters of the waves;
And snatched his rudder, and shook out more sail,
And day and night held on indignantly
O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,
Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,
To where the Atlantic raves
Outside the Western Straits; and unbent sails
There, where down cloudy cliffs through sheets of foam,
Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come;
And on the beach undid his corded bales.

(1853)

REQUIESCAT

Strew on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew!
In quiet she reposes;
Ah, would that I did too!

Her mirth the world required;
She bathed it in smiles of glee.
But her heart was tired, tired,
And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,
In mazes of heat and sound.
But for peace her soul was yearning,
And now peace laps her round.

Her cabined, ample spirit,
It fluttered and failed for breath.
To-night it doth inherit
The vasty hall of death.

(1853)

RUGBY CHAPEL

NOVEMBER 1857

Coldly, sadly descends
The autumn evening. The field
Strewn with its dank yellow drifts,
Of withered leaves, and the elms,
Fade into dimness apace,
Silent; — hardly a shout
From a few boys late at their play!
The lights come out in the street,
In the school-room windows; — but cold,
Solemn, unlighted, austere,
Through the gathering darkness, arise
The chapel-walls, in whose bound
Thou, my father! art laid.

There thou dost lie, in the gloom
Of the autumn evening. But ah,
That word, *gloom,* to my mind
Brings thee back, in the light
Of thy radiant vigor, again;
In the gloom of November we passed
Days not dark at thy side;
Seasons impaired not the ray
Of thy buoyant cheerfulness clear.
Such thou wast! and I stand
In the autumn evening, and think
Of bygone autumns with thee.

Fifteen years have gone round
Since thou arosest to tread,
In the summer-morning, the road
Of death, at a call unforeseen,
Sudden. For fifteen years,
We who till then in thy shade
Rested as under the boughs
Of a mighty oak, have endured
Sunshine and rain as we might,
Bare, unshaded, alone,
Lacking the shelter of thee.

O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain!
Somewhere, surely, afar,
In the sounding labor-house vast
Of being, is practised that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm!

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
Conscious or not of the past,
Still thou performest the word
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live —
Prompt, unwearied, as here!
Still thou upraisest with zeal
The humble good from the ground,
Sternly repressest the bad!

Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse
Those who with half-open eyes
Tread the border-land dim
'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st
Succorest! This was thy work,
This was thy life upon earth.

What is the course of the life
Of mortal men on the earth?
Most men eddy about
Here and there — eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurled in the dust.
Striving blindly, achieving
Nothing; and then they die —
Perish; — and no one asks
Who or what they have been,
More than he asks what waves,
In the moonlit solitudes mild
Of the midmost Ocean, have swelled,
Foamed for a moment, and gone.

And there are some, whom a thirst
Ardent, unquenchable, fires,
Not with the crowd to be spent,
Not without aim to go round
In an eddy of purposeless dust,
Effort unmeaning and vain.
Ah, yes! some of us strive
Not without action to die
Fruitless, but something to snatch
From dull oblivion, nor all
Glut the devouring grave!
We, we have chosen our path —
Path to a clear-purposed goal,
Path of advance! — but it leads
A long, steep journey, through sunk
Gorges, o'er mountains in snow.
Cheerful, with friends, we set forth —
Then, on the height, comes the storm.
Thunder crashes from rock
To rock, the cataracts reply,
Lightnings dazzle our eyes.
Roaring torrents have breached
The track, the stream-bed descends
In the place where the wayfarer once
Planted his footstep — the spray
Boils o'er its borders! aloft
The unseen snow-beds dislodge
Their hanging ruin! alas,
Havoc is made in our train!
Friends, who set forth at our side,
Falter, are lost in the storm.
We, we only are left!
With frowning foreheads, with lips
Sternly compressed, we strain on,
On — and at nightfall at last

Come to the end of our way,
To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks;
Where the gaunt and taciturn host
Stands on the threshold, the wind
Shaking his thin white hairs —
Holds his lantern to scan
Our storm-beat figures, and asks:
Whom in our party we bring,
Whom we have left in the snow?

Sadly we answer: We bring
Only ourselves! we lost
Sight of the rest in the storm.
Hardly ourselves we fought through,
Stripped, without friends, as we are.
Friends, companions, and train,
The avalanche swept from our side.

But thou would'st not *alone*
Be saved, my father! *alone*
Conquer and come to thy goal,
Leaving the rest in the wild.
We were weary, and we
Fearful, and we in our march
Fain to drop down and to die.
Still thou turnedst, and still
Beckonedst the trembler, and still
Gavest the weary, thy hand.

If, in the paths of the world,
Stones might have wounded thy feet,
Toil or dejection have tried
Thy spirit, of that we saw
Nothing — to us thou wast still
Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!
Therefore to thee it was given
Many to save with thyself;
And, at the end of thy day,
O, faithful shepherd! to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.

And through thee I believe
In the noble and great who are gone;
Pure souls honored and blest
By former ages, who else —
Such, so soulless, so poor,
Is the race of men whom I see —
Seemed but a dream of the heart,
Seemed but a cry of desire.
Yes! I believe that there lived
Others like thee in the past,
Not like the men of the crowd
Who all round me to-day
Bluster or cringe, and make life
Hideous, and arid, and vile;
But souls tempered with fire,
Fervent, heroic, and good,
Helpers and friends of mankind.

Servants of God! — or sons
Shall I not call you? because
Not as servants ye knew
Your Father's innermost mind,
His, who unwillingly sees
One of his little ones lost —
Yours is the praise, if mankind
Hath not as yet in its march
Fainted, and fallen, and died!

See! In the rocks of the world
Marches the host of mankind,
A feeble, wavering line.
Where are they tending? — A God
Marshaled them, gave them their goal.
Ah, but the way is so long!
Years they have been in the wild!
Sore thirst plagues them, the rocks,
Rising all round, overawe;
Factions divide them, their host
Threatens to break, to dissolve.
— Ah, keep, keep them combined!
Else, of the myriads who fill
That army, not one shall arrive;
Sole they shall stray; on the rocks
Batter for ever in vain,
Die one by one in the waste.

Then, in such hour of need
Of your fainting, dispirited race,
Ye, like angels, appear,
Radiant with ardor divine!
Beacons of hope, ye appear!
Languor is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow.
Ye alight in our van! at your voice,
Panic, despair, flee away.
Ye move through the ranks, recall
The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
Praise, re-inspire the brave!
Order, courage, return.
Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
Follow your steps as ye go.
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
Strengthen the wavering line,
Stablish, continue our march,
On, to the bound of the waste,
On, to the City of God.

(1867)

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI (1828–1882)

Although as a very young boy Rossetti showed a talent for versifying, he attained distinction first as a painter. After spending five years at King's College School and in art academies in London, he became a pupil of Ford Madox Brown, and later joined Holman Hunt, Millais, and others, in that revival of mystical interpretation and detailed elaboration in painting commonly called the Pre-Raphaelite movement. No considerable part of Rossetti's poems appeared in print before the publication of *Poems*, in 1870. The following year Robert Buchanan, in an article entitled *The Fleshly School in Poetry*, savagely attacked the alleged immorality of Rossetti's poems. Although Rossetti stoutly resisted the assault, it aggravated the mental depression which had begun with the death of his wife, and which persisted until his death. The last ten years of his life were tragically clouded by mental weakness and by the habit of taking chloral. Even during this period, however, creative flashes of his mind resulted in both poems and paintings of great beauty.

Poems (1870), *Dante and His Circle* (1874), and *Ballads and Sonnets* (1881) contain substantially all of Rossetti's poetry. The volume of 1881 brought out *The King's Tragedy*, and added sonnets to complete the *House of Life*, the first sonnets of which had appeared in 1870. Rossetti's only imaginative work in prose is *Hand and Soul* (1850). His poetry, often subtly mystical in thought, has been called, significantly, 'painter's poetry,' from its delicate picturesqueness and visual beauty.

MY SISTER'S SLEEP

She fell asleep on Christmas Eve:
At length the long-ungranted shade
Of weary eyelids overweighed
The pain naught else might yet relieve.

Our mother, who had leaned all day
Over the bed from chime to chime,
Then raised herself for the first time,
And as she sat her down, did pray.

Her little work-table was spread
With work to finish. For the glare
Made by her candle, she had care
To work some distance from the bed.

Without, there was a cold moon up,
Of winter radiance sheer and thin;
The hollow halo it was in
Was like an icy crystal cup.

Through the small room, with subtle sound
Of flame, by vents the fireshine drove
And reddened. In its dim alcove
The mirror shed a clearness round.

I had been sitting up some nights,
And my tired mind felt weak and blank;
Like a sharp strengthening wine it drank
The stillness and the broken lights.

Twelve struck. That sound, by dwindling years
Heard in each hour, crept off; and then
The ruffled silence spread again,
Like water that a pebble stirs.

Our mother rose from where she sat:
Her needles, as she laid them down,
Met lightly, and her silken gown
Settled: no other noise than that.

'Glory unto the Newly Born!'
So, as said angels, she did say;
Because we were in Christmas Day
Though it would still be long till morn.

Just then in the room over us
There was a pushing back of chairs,
As some who had sat unawares
So late, now heard the hour, and rose.

With anxious softly-stepping haste
Our mother went where Margaret lay,
Fearing the sounds o'er head — should they
Have broken her long watched-for rest!

She stooped an instant, calm, and turned,
But suddenly turned back again;
And all her features seemed in pain
With woe, and her eyes gazed and yearned.

For my part, I but hid my face,
And held my breath, and spoke no word:
There was none spoken: but I heard
The silence for a little space.

Our mother bowed herself and wept:
And both my arms fell, and I said,
'God knows I knew that she was dead.'
And there, all white, my sister slept.

Then kneeling, upon Christmas morn
A little after twelve o'clock,
We said, ere the first quarter struck,
'Christ's blessing on the newly born!'

(1850)

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

The blessed damozel leaned out
From the golden bar of heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Her seemed she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers;
Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.
. . . Yet now, and in this place,
Surely she leaned o'er me — her hair
Fell all about my face. . . .
Nothing: the autumn-fall of leaves.
The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is Space begun;
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met
'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
Spoke evermore among themselves
Their heart-remembered names;
And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bowed herself and stooped
Out of the circling charm;
Until her bosom must have made
The bar she leaned on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

From the fixed place of Heaven she saw
Time like a pulse shake fierce
Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove,
Within the gulf to pierce
Its path: and now she spoke as when
The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curled moon
Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
Had when they sang together.

(Ah, sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,
Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be hearkened? When those bells
Possessed the mid-day air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side
Down all the echoing stair?)

'I wish that he were come to me,
For he will come,' she said.
'Have I not prayed in Heaven? — on earth,
Lord, Lord, has he not prayed?
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
And shall I feel afraid?

'When round his head the aureole clings,
And he is clothed in white,
I 'll take his hand and go with him
To the deep wells of light;
As unto a stream we will step down,
And bathe there in God's sight.

'We two will stand beside that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps are stirred continually
With prayer sent up to God;
And see our old prayers, granted, melt
Each like a little cloud.

'We two will lie i' the shadow of
That living mystic tree
Within whose secret growth the Dove
Is sometimes felt to be,
While every leaf that his plumes touch
Saith his name audibly.

'And I myself will teach to him,
I myself, lying so,
The songs I sing here; which his voice
Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
And find some knowledge at each pause,
Or some new thing to know.'

(Alas! We two, we two, thou say'st!
Yea, one wast thou with me
That once of old. But shall God lift
To endless unity
The soul whose likeness with thy soul
Was but its love for thee?)

'We two,' she said, 'will seek the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys.

'Circlewise sit they, with bound locks
And foreheads garlanded;
Into the fine cloth white like flame
Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-robes for them
Who are just born, being dead.

'He shall fear, haply, and be dumb:
Then will I lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abashed or weak;
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak.

'Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
To him round whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads
Bowed with their aureoles:
And angels meeting us shall sing
To their citherns and citoles.

'There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me:—
Only to live as once on earth
With Love, only to be,
As then awhile, forever now
Together, I and he.'

She gazed and listened and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild,—

'All this is when he comes.' She ceased.
The light thrilled towards her, filled
With angels in strong level flight.
Her eyes prayed, and she smiled.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
Was vague in distant spheres:
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)

(1850)

FRANCESCA DA RIMINI
(From DANTE)

. . .

When I made answer, I began: 'Alas!
How many sweet thoughts and how much desire
Led these two onward to the dolorous pass!'
Then turned to them, as who would fain inquire,
And said: 'Francesca, these thine agonies
Wring tears for pity and grief that they inspire:—
But tell me,—in the season of sweet sighs,
When and what way did Love instruct you so
That he in your vague longings made you wise?'
Then she to me: 'There is no greater woe
Than the remembrance brings of happy days
In Misery; and this thy guide doth know.
But if the first beginnings to retrace
Of our sad love can yield thee solace here,
So will I be as one that weeps and says.
One day we read, for pastime and sweet cheer,
Of Lancelot, how he found Love tyrannous;
We were alone and without any fear.
Our eyes were drawn together, reading thus,
Full oft, and still our cheeks would pale and glow;
But one sole point it was that conquered us.
For when we read of that great lover, how
He kissed the smile which he had longed to win,—
Then he whom naught can sever from me now
Forever, kissed my mouth, all quivering.

A Galahalt was the book, and he that
writ:
Upon that day we read no more therein.'
At the tale told, while one soul uttered it,
The other wept: a pang so pitiable
That I was seized, like death, in swoon-
ing-fit,
And even as a dead body falls, I fell.
(1861)

LOVE'S NOCTURN

Master of the murmuring courts
Where the shapes of sleep convene! —
Lo! my spirit here exhorts
All the powers of thy demesne
For their aid to woo my queen.
What reports
Yield thy jealous courts unseen?

Vaporous, unaccountable,
Dreamworld lies forlorn of light,
Hollow like a breathing shell.
Ah! that from all dreams I might
Choose one dream and guide its flight!
I know well
What her sleep should tell to-night.

There the dreams are multitudes:
Some that will not wait for sleep,
Deep within the August woods;
Some that hum while rest may steep
Weary labor laid a-heap;
Interludes,
Some, of grievous moods that weep.

Poet's fancies all are there;
There the elf-girls flood with wings
Valleys full of plaintive air;
There breathe perfumes; there in rings
Whirl the foam-bewildered springs;
Siren there
Winds her dizzy hair and sings.

Thence the one dream mutually
Dreamed in bridal unison,
Less than walking ecstasy;
Half-formed visions that make moan
In the house of birth alone;
And what we
At death's wicket see, unknown.

But for mine own sleep, it lies
In one gracious form's control,
Fair with honorable eyes,
Lamps of a translucent soul:
O their glance is loftiest dole,
Sweet and wise,
Wherein Love descries his goal.

Reft of her, my dreams are all
Clammy trance that fears the sky;
Changing footpaths shift and fall;
From polluted coverts nigh,
Miserable phantoms sigh;
Quakes the pall,
And the funeral goes by.

Master, is it soothly said
That, as echoes of man's speech
Far in secret clefts are made,
So do all men's bodies reach
Shadows o'er thy sunken beach,—
Shape or shade
In those halls portrayed of each?

Ah! might I, by thy good grace
Groping in the windy stair
(Darkness and the breath of space
Like loud waters everywhere),
Meeting mine own image there
Face to face,
Send it from that place to her!

Nay, not I; but oh! do thou,
Master, from thy shadowkind
Call my body's phantom now:
Bid it bear its face declined
Till its flight her slumbers find,
And her brow
Feel its presence bow like wind.

Where in groves the gracile Spring
Trembles, with mute orison
Confidently strengthening,
Water's voice and wind's as one
Shed an echo in the sun.
Soft as Spring,
Master, bid it sing and moan

Song shall tell how glad and strong
Is the night she soothes alway;
Moan shall grieve with that parched tongue
Of the brazen hours of day:
Sounds as of the springtide they,
Moan and song,
While the chill months long for May.

Not the prayers which with all leave
The world's fluent woes prefer,—
Not the praise the world doth give,
Dulcet fulsome whisperer; —
Let it yield my love to her,
And achieve
Strength that shall not grieve or err.

Wheresoe'er my dreams befall,
Both at night-watch (let it say),
And where round the sun-dial
The reluctant hours of day,
Heartless, hopeless of their way,
Rest and call; —
There her glance doth fall and stay.

Suddenly her face is there:
So do mounting vapors wreathe
Subtle-scented transports where
The black fir-wood sets its teeth
Part the boughs, and looks beneath —
Lilies share
Secret waters there, and breathe.

Master, bid my shadow bend
Whispering thus till birth of light,
Lest new shapes that sleep may send
Scatter all its work to flight; —
Master, master of the night,
Bid it spend
Speech, song, prayer, and end aright.

Yet, ah, me! if at her head
There another phantom lean
Murmuring o'er the fragrant bed,
Ah! and if my spirit's queen
Smile those alien prayers between, —
Ah! poor shade!
Shall it strive, or fade unseen?

How should love's own messenger
Strive with love and be love's foe?
Master, nay! If thus, in her,
Sleep a wedded heart should show, —
Silent let mine image go,
Its old share
Of thy spell-bound air to know.

Like a vapor wan and mute,
Like a flame, so let it pass;
One low sigh across her lute,
One dull breath against her glass;
And to my sad soul, alas!
One salute
Cold as when death's foot shall pass.

Then, too, let all hopes of mine,
All vain hopes by night and day,
Slowly at thy summoning sign
Rise up pallid and obey.
Dreams, if this is thus, were they: —
Be they thine,
And to dreamworld pine away.

Yet from old time, life, not death,
Master, in thy rule is rife:
Lo! through thee, with mingling breath,
Adam woke beside his wife.
O Love, bring me so, for strife,
Force and faith,
Bring me so not death but life!

Yea, to Love himself is poured
This frail song of hope and fear,
Thou art Love, of one accord
With kind Sleep to bring her near,
Still-eyed, deep-eyed, ah, how dear!
Master, Lord,
In her name implored, O hear!

(1870)

THE CLOUD CONFINES

The day is dark and the night
To him that would search their heart;
No lips of cloud that will part
Nor morning song in the light:
Only, gazing alone,
To him wild shadows are shown,
Deep under deep unknown,
And height above unknown height.
Still we say as we go, —
'Strange to think by the way,
Whatever there is to know,
That shall we know one day.'

The Past is over and fled;
Named new, we name it the old;
Thereof some tale hath been told,
But no word comes from the dead·
Whether at all they be,
Or whether as bond or free,
Or whether they too were we,
Or by what spell they have sped.
Still we say as we go, —
'Strange to think by the way,
Whatever there is to know,
That shall we know one day.'

What of the heart of hate
That beats in thy breast, O Time? —
Red strife from the furthest prime,
And anguish of fierce debate;
War that shatters her slain,
And peace that grinds them as grain,
And eyes fixed ever in vain
On the pitiless eyes of Fate.
Still we say as we go, —
'Strange to think by the way,
Whatever there is to know,
That shall we know one day.'

What of the heart of love
That bleeds in thy breast, O Man?

Thy kisses snatched 'neath the ban
Of fangs that mock them above;
Thy bells prolonged unto knells,
Thy hope that a breath dispels,
Thy bitter forlorn farewells
And the empty echoes thereof?
Still we say as we go,—
'Strange to think by the way,
Whatever there is to know,
That shall we know one day.'

The sky leans dumb on the sea,
Aweary with all its wings;
And oh! the song the sea sings
Is dark everlastingly.
Our past is clean forgot,
Our present is and is not,
Our future's a sealed seedplot,
And what betwixt them are we?—
We who say as we go,—
'Strange to think by the way,
Whatever there is to know,
That shall we know one day.'

(1872)

THREE SHADOWS

I looked and saw your eyes
In the shadow of your hair,
As a traveler sees the stream
In the shadow of the wood;
And I said, 'My faint heart sighs,
Ah me! to linger there,
To drink deep and to dream
In that sweet solitude.'

I looked and saw your heart
In the shadow of your eyes,
As a seeker sees the gold
In the shadow of the stream;
And I said, 'Ah me! what art
Should win the immortal prize,
Whose want must make life cold
And heaven a hollow dream?'

I looked and saw your love
In the shadow of your heart,
As a diver sees the pearl
In the shadow of the sea;
And I murmured, not above
My breath, but all apart,—
'Ah! you can love, true girl,
And is your love for me?'

(1881)

THE KING'S TRAGEDY

JAMES I OF SCOTS — 20TH FEBRUARY 1473

I Catherine am a Douglas born,
A name to all Scots dear;
And Kate Barlass they've called me now
Through many a waning year.

This old arm's withered now. 'T was once
Most deft 'mong maidens all
To rein the steed, to wing the shaft,
To smite the palm-play ball.

In hall adown the close-linked dance
It has shone most white and fair;
It has been the rest for a true lord's head,
And many a sweet babe's nursing-bed,
And the bar to a King's chambère.

Aye, lasses, draw round Kate Barlass,
And hark with bated breath
How good King James, King Robert's son,
Was foully done to death.

Through all the days of his gallant youth
The princely James was pent,
By his friends at first and then by his foes,
In long imprisonment.

For the elder prince, the kingdom's heir,
By treason's murderous brood
Was slain; and the father quaked for the child
With the royal mortal blood

I' the Bass Rock fort, by his father's care,
Was his childhood's life assured;
And Henry the subtle Bolingbroke,
Proud England's king, 'neath the southron yoke
His youth for long years immured.

Yet in all things meet for a kingly man
Himself did he approve;
And the nightingale through his prison-wall
Taught him both lore and love.

For once, when the bird's song drew him close
To the opened window-pane,
In her bower beneath a lady stood,
A light of life to his sorrowful mood,
Like a lily amid the rain.

And for her sake, to the sweet bird's note,
He framed a sweeter song,
More sweet than ever a poet's heart
Gave yet to the English tongue.

She was a lady of royal blood;
And when, past sorrow and teen
He stood where still through his crownless years
His Scottish realm had been,
At Scone were the happy lovers crowned,
A heart-wed king and queen.

But the bird may fall from the bough of youth,
And song be turned to moan,
And love's storm-cloud be the shadow of hate,
When the tempest-waves of a troubled state
Are beating against a throne.

Yet well they loved; and the god of love,
Whom well the king had sung,
Might find on the earth no truer hearts
His lowliest swains among.

From the days when first she rode abroad
With Scottish maids in her train,
I Catherine Douglas won the trust
Of my mistress sweet Queen Jane.

And oft she sighed, 'To be born a King!'
And oft along the way
When she saw the homely lovers pass
She has said, 'Alack the day!'

Years waned,—the loving and toiling years:
Till England's wrong renewed
Drove James, by outrage cast on his crown,
To the open field of feud.

'T was when the king and his host were met
At the leaguer of Roxbro' hold,
The queen o' the sudden sought his camp
With a tale of dread to be told.

And she showed him a secret letter writ
That spoke of treasonous strife,
And how a band of his noblest lords
Were sworn to take his life.

'And it may be here or it may be there,
In the camp or the court,' she said:
'But for my sake come to your people's arms
And guard your royal head.'

Quoth he, ''T is the fifteenth day of the siege,
And the castle 's nigh to yield.'
'O face your foes on your throne,' she cried,
'And show the power you wield;
And under your Scottish people's love
You shall sit as under your shield.'

At the fair queen's side I stood that day
When he bade them raise the siege,
And back to his court he sped to know
How the lords would meet their liege.

But when he summoned his parliament,
The louring brows hung round,
Like clouds that circle the mountain-head
Ere the first low thunders sound.

For he had tamed the nobles' lust
And curbed their power and pride,
And reached out an arm to right the poor
Through Scotland far and wide;
And many a lordly wrong-doer
By the headsman's axe had died.

'T was then upspoke Sir Robert Græme,
The bold o'ermastering man:—
'O King, in the name of your Three Estates
I set you under their ban!

'For, as your lords made oath to you
Of service and fealty,
Even in like wise you pledged your oath
Their faithful sire to be:—

'Yet all we here that are nobly sprung
Have mourned dear kith and kin
Since first for the Scottish Barons' curse
Did your bloody rule begin.'

With that he laid his hands on his king:—
'Is this not so, my lords?'
But of all who had sworn to league with him
Not one spake back to his words.

Quoth the King:—'Thou speak'st but for one Estate,
Nor doth it avow thy gage.
Let my liege lords hale this traitor hence!'
The Græme fired dark with rage:—
'Who works for lesser men than himself,
He earns but a witness wage!'

But soon from the dungeon where he lay
He won by privy plots,
And forth he fled with a price on his head
To the country of the Wild Scots.

And word there came from Sir Robert Græme
To the King of Edinbro':—

'No liege of mine thou art; but I see
From this day forth alone in thee
God's creature, my mortal foe.

'Through thee are my wife and children lost,
My heritage and lands;
And when my God shall show me a way,
Thyself my mortal foe will I slay
With these my proper hands.'

Against the coming of Christmastide
That year the king bade call
I' the Black Friars' Charterhouse of Perth
A solemn festival.

And we of his household rode with him
In a close-ranked company;
But not till the sun had sunk from his throne
Did we reach the Scottish Sea.

That eve was clenched for a boding storm,
'Neath a toilsome moon, half seen;
The cloud stooped low and the surf rose high;
And where there was a line of the sky,
Wild wings loomed dark between.

And on a rock of the black beach-side
By the veiled moon dimly lit,
There was something seemed to heave with life
As the king drew nigh to it.

And was it only the tossing furze
Or brake of the waste sea-wold?
Or was it an eagle bent to the blast?
When near we came, we knew it at last
For a woman tattered and old.

But it seemed as though by a fire within
Her writhen limbs were wrung;
And as soon as the king was close to her,
She stood up gaunt and strong.

'T was then the moon sailed clear of the rack
On high in her hollow dome;
And still as aloft with hoary crest
Each clamorous wave rang home,
Like fire in snow the moonlight blazed
Amid the champing foam.

And the woman held his eyes with her eyes:—
'O King, thou art come at last;
But thy wraith has haunted the Scottish Sea
To my sight for four years past.

'Four years it is since first I met,
'Twixt the Duchray and the Dhu,
A shape whose feet clung close in a shroud,
And that shape for thine I knew.

'A year again, and on Inchkeith Isle
I saw thee pass in the breeze,
With the cerecloth risen above thy feet
And wound about thy knees.

'And yet a year, in the Links of Forth,
As a wanderer without rest,
Thou cam'st with both thine arms i' the shroud
That clung high up thy breast.

'And in this hour I find thee here,
And well mine eyes may note
That the winding-sheet hath passed thy breast
And risen around thy throat.

'And when I meet thee again, O King,
That of death hast such sore drouth,—
Except thou turn again on this shore,—
The winding-sheet shall have moved once more
And covered thine eyes and mouth.

'O King, whom poor men bless for their king,
Of thy fate be not so fain;
But these my words for God's message take,
And turn thy steed, O King, for her sake
Who rides beside thy rein!'

While the woman spoke, the king's horse reared
As if it would breast the sea,
And the queen turned pale as she heard on the gale
The voice die dolorously.

When the woman ceased, the steed was still,
But the king gazed on her yet,
And in silence save for the wail of the sea
His eyes and her eyes met.

At last he said:—'God's ways are his own;
Man is but shadow and dust.
Last night I prayed by his altar-stone;
To-night I wend to the Feast of His Son;
And in him I set my trust.

'I have held my people in sacred charge,
And have not feared the sting
Of proud men's hate,—to his will resigned
Who has but one same death for a hind
And one same death for a king.

'And if God in his wisdom have brought close
The day when I must die,
That day by water or fire or air
My feet shall fall in the destined snare
Wherever my road may lie.

'What man can say but the Fiend hath set
Thy sorcery on my path,
My heart with the fear of death to fill,
And turn me against God's very will
To sink in his burning wrath?'

The woman stood as the train rode past,
And moved nor limb nor eye;
And when we were shipped, we saw her there
Still standing against the sky.

As the ship made way, the moon once more
Sank slow in her rising pall;
And I thought of the shrouded wraith of the king,
And I said, 'The heavens know all.'

And now, ye lasses, must ye hear
How my name is Kate Barlass:—
But a little thing, when all the tale
Is told of the weary mass
Of crime and woe which in Scotland's realm
God's will let come to pass.

'T was in the Charterhouse of Perth
That the king and all his court
Were met, the Christmas Feast being done,
For solace and disport.

'T was a wind-wild eve in February,
And against the casement-pane
The branches smote like summoning hands
And muttered the driving rain.

And when the wind swooped over the lift
And made the whole heaven frown,
It seemed a grip was laid on the walls
To tug the housetop down.

And the queen was there, more stately fair
Than a lily in garden set;
And the king was loth to stir from her side;
For as on the day when she was his bride,
Even so he loved her yet.

And the Earl of Athole, the king's false friend,
Sat with him at the board;
And Robert Stuart the chamberlain
Who had sold his sovereign lord.

Yet the traitor Christopher Chaumber there
Would fain have told him all,
And vainly four times that night he strove
To reach the king through the hall.

But the wine is bright at the goblet's brim
Though the poison lurk beneath;
And the apples still are red on the tree
Within whose shade may the adder be
That shall turn thy life to death.

There was a knight of the king's fast friends
Whom he called the King of Love;
And to such bright cheer and courtesy
That name might best behoove.

And the king and queen both loved him well
For his gentle knightliness;
And with him the king, as that eve wore on,
Was playing at the chess.

And the king said, (for he thought to jest
And soothe the queen thereby)—
'In a book 't is writ that this same year
A king shall in Scotland die.

'And I have pondered the matter o'er,
And this have I found, Sir Hugh,—
There are but two kings on Scottish ground,
And those kings are I and you.

'And I have a wife and a newborn heir,
And you are yourself alone;
So stand you stark at my side with me
To guard our double throne.

'For here sit I and my wife and child,
As well your heart shall approve,
In full surrender and soothfastness,
Beneath your Kingdom of Love.'

And the knight laughed, and the queen too smiled;
But I knew her heavy thought,
And I strove to find in the good king's jest
What cheer might thence be wrought.

And I said, 'My Liege, for the queen's dear love
Now sing the song that of old
You made, when a captive prince you lay,

And the nightingale sang sweet on the spray,
In Windsor's castle-hold.'

Then he smiled the smile I knew so well
When he thought to please the queen;
The smile which under all bitter frowns
Of hate that rose between,
For ever dwelt at the poet's heart
Like the bird of love unseen.

And he kissed her hand and took his harp,
And the music sweetly rang;
And when the song burst forth, it seemed
'T was the nightingale that sang.

'Worship, ye lovers, on this May:
Of bliss your kalends are begun:
Sing with us, Away, Winter, away!
Come, Summer, the sweet season and sun!
Awake for shame,—your heaven is won,—
And amorously your heads lift all:
Thank Love, that you to his grace doth call!'

But when he bent to the queen and sang
The speech whose praise was hers,
It seemed his voice was the voice of the spring
And the voice of the bygone years.

'The fairest and the freshest flower
That ever I saw before that hour,
The which o' the sudden made to start
The blood of my body to my heart.
. . .
Ah sweet, are ye a worldly creature
Or heavenly thing in form of nature?'

And the song was long, and richly stored
With wonder and beauteous things;
And the harp was tuned to every change
Of minstrel ministerings;
But when he spoke of the queen at the last,
Its strings were his own heart-strings.

'Unworthy but only of her grace,
Upon Love's rock that 's easy and sure,
In guerdon of all my love's space
She took me her humble creäture.
Thus fell my blissful aventure
In youth of love that from day to day
Flowereth aye new, and further I say.

'To reckon all the circumstance
As it happed when lessen gan my sore,
Of my rancor and woful chance,
It were too long,—I have done therefor.
And of this flower I say no more
But unto my help her heart hath tended
And even from death her man defended.'

'Aye, even from death,' to myself I said;
For I thought of the day when she
Had borne him the news, at Roxbro' siege,
Of the fell confederacy.

But Death even then took aim as he sang
With an arrow deadly bright;
And the grinning skull lurked grimly aloof,
And the wings were spread far over the roof
More dark than the winter night.

Yet truly along the amorous song
Of Love's high pomp and state,
There were words of Fortune's trackless doom
And the dreadful face of Fate.

And oft have I heard again in dreams
The voice of dire appeal
In which the king then sang of the pit
That is under Fortune's wheel.

'And under the wheel beheld I there
An ugly pit as deep as hell,
That to behold I quaked for fear:
. And this I heard, that who therein fell
Came no more up, tidings to tell:
Whereat, astound of the fearful sight,
I wist not what to do for fright.'

And oft has my thought called up again
These words of the changeful song: —
'Wist thou thy pain and thy travàil
To come, well might'st thou weep and wail!'
And our wail, O God! is long.

But the song's end was all of his love;
And well his heart was graced
With her smiling lips and her tear-bright eyes
As his arm went round her waist.

And on the swell of her long fair throat
Close clung the necklet-chain
As he bent her pearl-tired head aside,
And in the warmth of his love and pride
He kissed her lips full fain.

And her true face was a rosy red,
The very red of the rose
That, couched on the happy garden-bed,
In the summer sunlight glows.

And all the wondrous things of love
That sang so sweet through the song
Were in the look that met in their eyes,
And the look was deep and long.

'T was then a knock came at the outer gate,
And the usher sought the king.
'The woman you met by the Scottish Sea,
My Liege, would tell you a thing;
And she says that her present need for speech
Will bear no gainsaying.'

And the king said: 'The hour is late;
To-morrow will serve, I ween.'
Then he charged the usher strictly, and said:
'No word of this to the queen.'

But the usher came again to the king.
'Shall I call her back?' quoth he:
'For as she went on her way, she cried,
"Woe! woe! then the thing must be!"'

And the king paused, but he did not speak.
Then he called for the voidee-cup:
And as we heard the twelfth hour strike,
There by true lips and false lips alike
Was the draught of trust drained up.

So with reverence meet to king and queen,
To bed went all from the board;
And the last to leave of the courtly train
Was Robert Stuart the chamberlain
Who had sold his sovereign lord.

And all the locks of the chamber-door
Had the traitor riven and brast;
And that Fate might win sure way from afar,
He had drawn out every bolt and bar
That made the entrance fast.

And now at midnight he stole his way
To the moat of the outer wall,
And laid strong hurdles closely across
Where the traitors' tread should fall.

But we that were the queen's bower-maids
Alone were left behind;
And with heed we drew the curtains close
Against the winter wind.

And now that all was still through the hall,
More clearly we heard the rain
That clamored ever against the glass
And the boughs that beat on the pane.

But the fire was bright in the ingle-nook,
And through empty space around
The shadows cast on the arrased wall
'Mid the pictured kings stood sudden and tall
Like specters sprung from the ground.

And the bed was dight in a deep alcove;
And as he stood by the fire
The king was still in talk with the queen
While he doffed his goodly attire.

And the song had brought the image back
Of many a bygone year;
And many a loving word they said
With hand in hand and head laid to head;
And none of us went anear.

But Love was weeping outside the house,
A child in the piteous rain;
And as he watched the arrow of Death,
He wailed for his own shafts close in the sheath
That never should fly again.

And now beneath the window arose
A wild voice suddenly:
And the king reared straight, but the queen fell back
As for bitter dule to dree;
And all of us knew the woman's voice
Who spoke by the Scottish Sea.

'O King,' she cried, 'in an evil hour
They drove me from thy gate;
And yet my voice must rise to thine ears;
But alas! it comes too late!

'Last night at mid-watch, by Aberdour,
When the moon was dead in the skies,
O King, in a death-light of thine own
I saw thy shape arise.

'And in full season, as erst I said,
The doom had gained its growth;
And the shroud had risen above thy neck
And covered thine eyes and mouth.

'And no moon woke, but the pale dawn broke,
And still thy soul stood there;
And I thought its silence cried to my soul
As the first rays crowned its hair.

'Since then have I journeyed fast and fain
In very despite of Fate,
Lest hope might still be found in God's will:
But they drove me from thy gate.

'For every man on God's ground, O King,
His death grows up from his birth
In a shadow-plant perpetually;
And thine towers high, a black yew-tree,
O'er the Charterhouse of Perth!'

That room was built far out from the house;
And none but we in the room
Might hear the voice that rose beneath,
Nor the tread of the coming doom.

For now there came a torchlight-glare,
And a clang of arms there came;
And not a soul in that space but thought
Of the foe Sir Robert Græme.

Yea, from the country of the Wild Scots,
O'er mountain, valley, and glen,
He had brought with him in murderous league
Three hundred armèd men.

The king knew all in an instant's flash,
And like a king did he stand;
But there was no armor in all the room,
Nor weapon lay to his hand.

And all we women flew to the door
And thought to have made it fast;
But the bolts were gone and the bars were gone
And the locks were riven and brast.

And he caught the pale, pale queen in his arms
As the iron footsteps fell,—
Then loosed her, standing alone, and said,
'Our bliss was our farewell!'

And 'twixt his lips he murmured a prayer,
And he crossed his brow and breast;
And proudly in royal hardihood
Even so with folded arms he stood,—
The prize of the bloody quest.

Then on me leaped the queen like a deer:—
'O Catherine, help!' she cried.
And low at his feet we clasped his knees
Together side by side.
'Oh! even a king, for his people's sake,
From treasonous death must hide!'

'For *her* sake most!' I cried, and I marked
The pang that my words could wring.
And the iron tongs from the chimney-nook
I snatched and held to the king:—
'Wrench up the plank! and the vault beneath
Shall yield safe harboring.'

With brows low-bent, from my eager hand
The heavy heft did he take;
And the plank at his feet he wrenched and tore;
And as he frowned through the open floor,
Again I said, 'For her sake!'

Then he cried to the queen, 'God's will be done!'
For her hands were clasped in prayer.
And down he sprang to the inner crypt;
And straight we closed the plank he had ripped,
And toiled to smooth it fair.

(Alas! in that vault a gap once was
Wherethro' the king might have fled:
But three days since close-walled had it been
By his will; for the ball would roll therein
When without at the palm he played.)

Then the queen cried, 'Catherine, keep the door,
And I to this will suffice!'
At her word I rose all dazed to my feet,
And my heart was fire and ice.

And louder ever the voices grew,
And the tramp of men in mail;
Until to my brain it seemed to be
As though I tossed on a ship at sea
In the teeth of a crashing gale.

Then back I flew to the rest; and hard
We strove with sinews knit
To force the table against the door
But we might not compass it.

Then my wild gaze sped far down the hall
To the place of the hearthstone-sill;
And the queen bent ever above the floor,
For the plank was rising still.

And now the rush was heard on the stair,
And 'God, what help?' was our cry.
And was I frenzied or was I bold?
I looked at each empty stanchion-hold,
And no bar but my arm had I!

Like iron felt my arm, as through
The staple I made it pass:—
Alack! it was flesh and bone — no more!
'T was Catherine Douglas sprang to the door,
But I fell back Kate Barlass.

With that they all thronged into the hall,
Half dim to my failing ken;

And the space that was but a void before
Was a crowd of wrathful men.

Behind the door I had fall'n and lay,
Yet my sense was widely aware,
And for all the pain of my shattered arm
I never fainted there.

Even as I fell, my eyes were cast
Where the king leaped down to the pit;
And lo! the plank was smooth in its place,
And the queen stood far from it.

And under the litters and through the bed
And within the presses all
The traitors sought for the king, and pierced
The arras around the wall.

And through the chamber they ramped and stormed
Like lions loose in the lair,
And scarce could trust to their very eyes,—
For behold! no king was there.

Then one of them seized the queen, and cried,—
'Now tell us, where is thy lord?'
And he held the sharp point over her heart:
She drooped not her eyes nor did she start,
But she answered never a word.

Then the sword half pierced the true true breast:
But it was the Græme's own son
Cried, 'This is a woman,—we seek a man!'
And away from her girdle-zone
He struck the point of the murderous steel;
And that foul deed was not done.

And forth flowed all the throng like a sea,
And 't was empty space once more;
And my eyes sought out the wounded queen
As I lay behind the door.

And I said: 'Dear Lady, leave me here,
For I cannot help you now;
But fly while you may, and none shall reck
Of my place here lying low.'

And she said, 'My Catherine, God help thee!'
Then she looked to the distant floor,
And clasping her hands, 'O God help *him*,'
She sobbed, 'for we can no more!'

But God he knows what help may mean,
If it mean to live or to die;
And what sore sorrow and mighty moan
On earth it may cost ere yet a throne
Be filled in his house on high.

And now the ladies fled with the queen;
And through the open door
The night-wind wailed round the empty room
And the rushes shook on the floor.

And the bed drooped low in the dark recess
Whence the arras was rent away;
And the firelight still shone over the space
Where our hidden secret lay.

And the rain had ceased, and the moonbeams lit
The window high in the wall,—
Bright beams that on the plank that I knew
Through the painted pane did fall
And gleamed with the splendor of Scotland's crown
And shield armorial.

But then a great wind swept up the skies,
And the climbing moon fell back;
And the royal blazon fled from the floor,
And naught remained on its track;
And high in the darkened window-pane
The shield and the crown were black.

And what I say next I partly saw
And partly I heard in sooth,
And partly since from the murderers' lips
The torture wrung the truth.

For now again came the armèd tread,
And fast through the hall it fell;
But the throng was less: and ere I saw,
By the voice without I could tell
That Robert Stuart had come with them
Who knew that chamber well.

And over the space the Græme strode dark
With his mantle round him flung;
And in his eye was a flaming light
But not a word on his tongue.

And Stuart held a torch to the floor,
And he found the thing he sought;
And they slashed the plank away with their swords;
And O God! I fainted not!

And the traitor held his torch in the gap,
All smoking and smoldering;

And through the vapor and fire, beneath
In the dark crypt's narrow ring,
With a shout that pealed to the room's high roof
They saw their naked king.

Half nakèd he stood, but stood as one
Who yet could do and dare:
With the crown, the king was stript away,—
The knight was reft of his battle-array,—
But still the man was there.

From the rout then stepped a villain forth,
Sir John Hall was his name;
With a knife unsheathed he leapt to the vault
Beneath the torchlight-flame.

Of his person and stature was the king
A man right manly strong,
And mightily by the shoulder-blades
His foe to his feet he flung.

Then the traitor's brother, Sir Thomas Hall,
Sprang down to work his worst;
And the king caught the second man by the neck
And flung him above the first.

And he smote and trampled them under him;
And a long month thence they bare
All black their throats with the grip of his hands
When the hangman's hand came there.

And sore he strove to have had their knives,
But the sharp blades gashed his hands.
Oh! James so armed, thou hadst battled there
Till help had come of thy bands;
And oh! once more thou hadst held our throne
And ruled thy Scottish lands!

But while the king o'er his foes still raged
With a heart that naught could tame,
Another man sprang down to the crypt;
And with his sword in his hand hard-gripped,
There stood Sir Robert Græme.

(Now shame on the recreant traitor's heart
Who durst not face his king,
Till the body unarmed was wearied out
With two-fold combating!

Ah! well might the people sing and say,
As oft ye have heard aright:—
O Robert Græme, O Robert Græme,
Who slew our king, God give thee shame!'
For he slew him not as a knight.)

And the naked king turned round at bay,
But his strength had passed the goal,
And he could but gasp:—'Mine hour is come;
But oh! to succor thine own soul's doom,
Let a priest now shrive my soul!'

And the traitor looked on the king's spent strength
And said:—'Have I kept my word?—
Yea, King, the mortal pledge that I gave?
No black friar's shrift thy soul shall have,
But the shrift of this red sword!'

With that he smote his king through the breast;
And all they three in the pen
Fell on him and stabbed and stabbed him there
Like merciless murderous men.

Yet seemed it now that Sir Robert Græme,
Ere the king's last breath was o'er,
Turned sick at heart with the deadly sight
And would have done no more.

But a cry came from the troop above:—
'If him thou do not slay,
The price of his life that thou dost spare
Thy forfeit life shall pay!'

O God! what more did I hear or see,
Or how should I tell the rest,
But there at length our king lay slain
With sixteen wounds in his breast.

O God! and now did a bell boom forth,
And the murderers turned and fled;—
Too late, too late, O God, did it sound?—
And I heard the true men mustering round,
And the cries and the coming tread.

But ere they came, to the black death-gap
Somewise did I creep and steal;
And lo! or ever I swooned away,
Through the dusk I saw where the white face lay
In the pit of Fortune's wheel.

And now, ye Scottish maids who have heard
Dread things of the days grown old,—
Even at the last, of true Queen Jane
May somewhat yet be told,

And how she dealt for her dear lord's sake
Dire vengeance manifold.

'T was in the Charterhouse of Perth,
In the fair-lit Death-chapelle,
That the slain King's corpse on bier was laid
With chaunt and requiem-knell.

And all with royal wealth of balm
Was the body purified;
And none could trace on the brow and lips
The death that he had died.

In his robes of state he lay asleep
With orb and scepter in hand;
And by the crown he wore on his throne
Was his kingly forehead spanned.

And, girls, 't was a sweet sad thing to see
How the curling golden hair,
As in the day of the poet's youth,
From the king's crown clustered there.

And if all had come to pass in the brain
That throbbed beneath those curls,
Then Scots had said in the days to come
That this their soul was a different home
And a different Scotland, girls!

And the queen sat by him night and day,
And oft she knelt in prayer,
All wan and pale in the widow's veil
That shrouded her shining hair.

And I had got good help of my hurt:
And only to me some sign
She made; and save the priests that were there
No face would she see but mine.

And the month of March wore on apace;
And now fresh couriers fared
Still from the country of the Wild Scots
With news of the traitors snared.

And still as I told her day by day,
Her pallor changed to sight,
And the frost grew to a furnace-flame,
That burnt her visage white.

And evermore as I brought her word,
She bent to her dead King James,
And in the cold ear with fire-drawn breath,
She spoke the traitors' names.

But when the name of Sir Robert Græme
Was the one she had to give,
I ran to hold her up from the floor;
For the froth was on her lips, and sore
I feared that she could not live.

And the month of March wore nigh to its end,
And still was the death-pall spread;
For she would not bury her slaughtered lord
Till his slayers all were dead.

And now of their dooms dread tidings came,
And of torments fierce and dire;
And naught she spake,— she had ceased to speak,
But her eyes were a soul on fire.

But when I told her the bitter end
Of the stern and just award,
She leaned o'er the bier, and thrice three times
She kissed the lips of her lord.

And then she said,— 'My King, they are dead!'
And she knelt on the chapel-floor,
And whispered low with a strange proud smile,
'James, James, they suffered more!'

Last she stood up to her queenly height,
But she shook like an autumn leaf,
As though the fire wherein she burned
Then left the body, and all were turned
To winter of life-long grief.

And 'O James!' she said,—'My James!' she said,—
'Alas for the woeful thing,
That a poet true and a friend of man,
In desperate days of bale and ban,
Should needs be born a King!'

(1881)

SONNETS FROM THE HOUSE OF LIFE

A Sonnet is a moment's monument,—
Memorial from the Soul's eternity,
To one dead deathless hour. Look that it be,
Whether for lustral rite or dire portent,
Of its own arduous fulness reverent:
Carve it in ivory or in ebony,
As Day or Night may rule; and let Time see
Its flowering crest impearled and orient.
A Sonnet is a coin: its face reveals

The soul,— its converse, to what Power 't is due: —
Whether for tribute to the august appeals
Of Life, or dower in Love's high retinue,
It serve; or, 'mid the dark wharf's cavernous breath,
In Charon's palm it pay the toll to Death.

IV. LOVE-SIGHT

When do I see thee most, belovèd one?
When in the light the spirits of mine eyes
Before thy face, their altar, solemnize
The worship of that Love through thee made known?
Or when in the dusk hours, (we two alone,)
Close-kissed and eloquent of still replies,
Thy twilight-hidden glimmering visage lies,
And my soul only sees thy soul its own?
O love, my love! if I no more should see
Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,
Nor image of thine eyes in any spring,—
How then should sound upon Life's darkening slope,
The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,
The wind of Death's imperishable wing?

XIX. SILENT NOON

Your hands lie open in the long fresh grass,—
The finger-points look through like rosy blooms:
Your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams and glooms
'Neath billowing skies that scatter and amass.
All round our nest, far as the eye can pass,
Are golden kingcup-fields with silver edge
Where the cow-parsley skirts the hawthorn-hedge.
'T is visible silence, still as the hour-glass.
Deep in the sun-searched growths the dragon-fly,
Hangs like a blue thread loosened from the sky: —
So this winged hour is dropt to us from above.
Oh! clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower,
This close-companioned inarticulate hour
When two-fold silence was the song of love.

XXI. LOVE-SWEETNESS

Sweet dimness of her loosened hair's downfall
About thy face; her sweet hands round thy head
In gracious fostering union garlanded;
Her tremulous smiles; her glances' sweet recall
Of love; her murmuring sighs memorial;
Her mouth's culled sweetness by thy kisses shed
On cheeks and neck and eyelids, and so led
Back to her mouth which answers there for all: —
What sweeter than these things, except the thing
In lacking which all these would lose their sweet: —
The confident heart's still fervor; the swift beat
And soft subsidence of the spirit's wing,
Then when it feels in cloud-girt wayfaring,
The breath of kindred plumes against its feet?

XXVI. MID-RAPTURE

Thou lovely and belovèd, thou my love;
Whose kiss seems still the first; whose summoning eyes,
Even now, as for our love-world's new sunrise,
Shed very dawn; whose voice, attuned above
All modulation of the deep-bowered dove,
Is like a hand laid softly on the soul;
Whose hand is like a sweet voice to control
Those worn tired brows it hath the keeping of: —
What word can answer to thy word,— what gaze
To thine, which now absorbs within its sphere
My worshipping face, till I am mirrored there
Light-circled in a heaven of deep-drawn rays?
What clasp, what kiss mine inmost heart can prove,
O lovely and belovèd, O my love?

LV. STILLBORN LOVE

The hour which might have been yet might not be,
Which man's and woman's heart conceived and bore
Yet whereof life was barren,— on what shore
Bides it the breaking of Time's weary sea?
Bondchild of all consummate joys set free,
It somewhere sighs and serves, and mute before
The house of Love, hears through the echoing door

His hours elect in choral consonancy.
But lo! what wedded souls now hand in hand
Together tread at last the immortal strand
With eyes where burning memory lights love home?
Lo! how the little outcast hour has turned
And leaped to them and in their faces yearned: —
'I am your child: O parents, ye have come!'

LXIII. INCLUSIVENESS

The changing guests, each in a different mood,
Sit at the roadside table and arise:
And every life among them in likewise
Is a soul's board set daily with new food.
What man has bent o'er his son's sleep, to brood
How that face shall watch his when cold it lies? —
Or thought, as his own mother kissed his eyes,
Of what her kiss was when his father wooed?
May not this ancient room thou sitt'st in dwell
In separate living souls for joy or pain?
Nay, all its corners may be painted plain?
Where heaven shows pictures of some life spent well;
And may be stamped, a memory all in vain,
Upon the sight of lidless eyes in hell.

LXV. KNOWN IN VAIN

As two whose love, first foolish, widening scope,
Knows suddenly, to music high and soft,
The holy of holies; who because they scoffed
Are now amazed with shame, nor dare to cope
With the whole truth aloud, lest heaven should ope;
Yet, at their meetings, laugh not as they laughed
In speech; nor speak, at length; but sitting oft
Together, within hopeless sight of hope
For hours are silent: — So it happeneth
When Work and Will awake too late, to gaze
After their life sailed by, and hold their breath.
Ah! who shall dare to search through what sad maze
Thenceforth their incommunicable ways
Follow the desultory feet of Death?

LXXI. THE CHOICE. I

Eat thou and drink; to-morrow thou shalt die.
Surely the earth, that's wise being very old,
Needs not our help. Then loose me, love, and hold
Thy sultry hair up from my face; that I
May pour for thee this golden wine, brim-high,
Till round the glass thy fingers glow like gold.
We'll drown all hours; thy song, while hours are tolled,
Shall leap, as fountains veil the changing sky.
Now kiss, and think that there are really those,
My own high-bosomed beauty, who increase
Vain gold, vain lore, and yet might choose our way!
Through many years they toil; then on a day
They die not,— for their life was death,— but cease;
And round their narrow lips the mold falls close.

LXXII. THE CHOICE. II

Watch thou and fear; to-morrow thou shalt die.
Or art thou sure thou shalt have time for death?
Is not the day which God's word promiseth
To come man knows not when? In yonder sky,
Now while we speak, the sun speeds forth: can I
Or thou assure him of his goal? God's breath
Even at this moment haply quickeneth
The air to a flame; till spirits, always nigh
Though screened and hid, shall walk the daylight here.
And dost thou prate of all that man shall do?
Canst thou, who hast but plagues, presume to be
Glad in his gladness that comes after thee?
Will *his* strength slay *thy* worm in hell? Go to:
Cover thy countenance, and watch, and fear.

LXXIII. THE CHOICE. III

Think thou and act; to-morrow thou shalt die.

Outstretched in the sun's warmth upon the shore,
Thou say'st: 'Man's measured path is all gone o'er;
Up all his years, steeply, with strain and sigh,
Man clomb until he touched the truth; and I,
Even I, am he whom it was destined for.'
How should this be? Art thou then so much more
Than they who sowed, that thou shouldst reap thereby?
Nay, come up hither. From this wave-washed mound
Unto the furthest flood-brim look with me;
Then reach on with thy thought till it be drowned.
Miles and miles distant though the last line be,
And though thy soul sail leagues and leagues beyond,—
Still, leagues beyond those leagues, there is more sea.

LXXXVI. LOST DAYS

The lost days of my life until to-day,
What were they, could I see them on the street
Lie as they fell? Would they be ears of wheat
Sown once for food but trodden into clay?
Or golden coins squandered and still to pay?
Or drops of blood dabbling the guilty feet?
Or such spilt water as in dreams must cheat
The undying throats of hell, athirst alway?
I do not see them here; but after death
God knows I know the faces I shall see,
Each one a murdered self, with low last breath.
'I am thyself,—what hast thou done to me?'
'And I—and I—thyself,' (lo! each one saith)
'And thou thyself to all eternity!'

XCVII. A SUPERSCRIPTION

Look in my face; my name is Might-have-been;
I am also called No-more, Too-late, Farewell;
Unto thine ear I hold the dead-sea shell
Cast up thy Life's foam-fretted feet between;
Unto thine eyes the glass where that is seen
Which had Life's form and Love's, but by my spell
Is now a shaken shadow intolerable,
Of ultimate things unuttered the frail screen.
Mark me, how still I am! But should there dart
One moment through thy soul the soft surprise
Of that winged Peace which lulls the breath of sighs,—
Then shalt thou see me smile, and turn apart
Thy visage to mine ambush at thy heart,
Sleepless with cold commemorative eyes.

CI. THE ONE HOPE

When vain desire at last and vain regret
Go hand in hand to death, and all is vain,
What shall assuage the unforgotten pain
And teach the unforgetful to forget?
Shall Peace be still a sunk stream long unmet,—
Or may the soul at once in a green plain
Stoop through the spray of some sweet life-fountain
And cull the dew-drenched flowering amulet?
Ah! when the wan soul in that golden air
Between the scriptured petals softly blown
Peers breathless for the gift of grace unknown,—
Ah! let none other alien spell soe'er
But only the one Hope's one name be there,—
Not less nor more, but even that word alone.
(1869, 1870, 1881)

WILLIAM MORRIS (1834–1896)

After a youth of wide reading and varied schooling, Morris reached Exeter College, Oxford, in 1853, with broad information and strongly developed intellectual tendencies. Aside from a notable achievement in general reading, the most important result of his Oxford residence was a close friendship with Edward Burne-Jones, with whom he continued to live in the closest intimacy. A propensity toward Romanism, and then toward Anglicanism, resolved itself ultimately into an enthusiam for art, for social reform, and for the utterances of Carlyle, Ruskin, and Kingsley. Travels in northern France, in 1854 and 1855, together with his permanent love for French Gothic art, led to his decision to become an architect. After he had studied architecture sincerely for a year or so, Rossetti persuaded him to take a studio and devote himself to painting. Morris found his true vocation, however, when, in 1861, with Rossetti, Burne-Jones, and others, he established a firm in London for designing and manufacturing artistic furniture and household decorations. The scope of the enterprise was eventually enlarged to include the manufacture of textiles, dyeing, book-illumination, and printing. In 1890, Morris founded the famous Kelmscott Press, at Hammersmith. In advancing the minor arts and in sustaining the principle that every object and utensil should be beautiful, Morris did more than any other man of his time. In 1885, he became an active socialist, lecturing freely to workingmen, and contributing to *The Commonweal*, the organ of the Socialistic League.

Except during certain periods of interruption, Morris wrote voluminously throughout his life. *The Defence of Guinevere* (1858), his earliest considerable publication, is among his best. From the Arthurian themes of this work, he turned with facility to the Greek, Old French, and Norse stories seen in *Life and Death of Jason* (1867), *The Earthly Paradise* (1868–70), and *Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs* (1876). Aside from these original poetical writings, Morris's chief works are his romances,— in prose, or in prose and verse,— of which the most important are *A Tale of the House of the Wolfings* (1889), *The Roots of the Mountains* (1890), *The Story of the Glittering Plain* (1891) and *The Well at the World's End* (1896). Of his translations the most notable are the *Grettis Saga* (1869) and the *Völsunga Saga* (1870). Morris stands preëminent in the literature of the nineteenth century as a charming story-teller. In his stories we find neither humor nor a dramatic grasp of situations, but rather, dreamy narrative idealizations of an alluring past.

THE EARTHLY PARADISE

Of Heaven or Hell I have no power to sing,
I cannot ease the burden of your fears,
Or make quick-coming death a little thing,
Or bring again the pleasure of past years,
Nor for my words shall ye forget your tears,
Or hope again for aught that I can say,
The idle singer of an empty day.

But rather, when aweary of your mirth,
From full hearts still unsatisfied ye sigh,
And, feeling kindly unto all the earth,
Grudge every minute as it passes by,
Made the more mindful that the sweet days die,—
Remember me a little then, I pray,
The idle singer of an empty day.

The heavy trouble, the bewildering care
That weighs us down who live and earn our bread,
These idle verses have no power to bear;
So let me sing of names rememberèd,
Because they, living not, can ne'er be dead,
Or long time take their memory quite away
From us poor singers of an empty day.

Dreamer of dreams, born out of my due time,
Why should I strive to set the crooked straight?
Let it suffice me that my murmuring rime
Beats with light wing against the ivory gate,
Telling a tale not too importunate
To those who in the sleepy region stay,
Lulled by the singer of an empty day.

Folk say, a wizard to a northern king
At Christmas-tide such wondrous things did show,
That through one window men beheld the spring,
And through another saw the summer glow,
And through a third the fruited vines arow,
While still, unheard, but in its wonted way,
Piped the drear wind of that December day.

So with this Earthly Paradise it is,
If ye will read aright and pardon me,
Who strive to build a shadowy isle of bliss
Midmost the beating of the steely sea,
Where tossed about all hearts of men must be;
Whose ravening monsters mighty men shall slay,
Not the poor singer of an empty day.

ATALANTA'S RACE

Atalanta, daughter of King Schœneus, not willing to lose her virgin's estate, made it a law to all suitors that they should run a race with her in the public place, and if they failed to overcome her should die unrevenged; and thus many brave men perished. At last came Milanion, the son of Amphidamas, who, outrunning her with the help of Venus, gained the virgin and wedded her.

I

Through thick Arcadian woods a hunter went,
Following the beasts up, on a fresh spring day;
But since his horn-tipped bow, but seldom bent,
Now at the noontide naught had happed to slay,
Within a vale he called his hounds away,
Hearkening the echoes of his lone voice cling
About the cliffs and through the beech-trees ring.

But when they ended, still awhile he stood,
And but the sweet familiar thrush could hear,
And all the day-long noises of the wood,
And o'er the dry leaves of the vanished year
His hounds' feet pattering as they drew anear,
And heavy breathing from their heads low hung,
To see the mighty cornel bow unstrung.

Then smiling did he turn to leave the place,
But with his first step some new fleeting thought
A shadow cast across his sunburnt face:
I think the golden net that April brought
From some warm world his wavering soul had caught;
For, sunk in vague sweet longing, did he go
Betwixt the trees with doubtful steps and slow.

Yet howsoever slow he went, at last
The trees grew sparser, and the wood was done;
Whereon one farewell, backward look he cast,
Then, turning round to see what place was won,
With shaded eyes looked underneath the sun,
And o'er green meads and new-turned furrows brown
Beheld the gleaming of King Schœneus' town.

So thitherward he turned, and on each side
The folk were busy on the teeming land,
And man and maid from the brown furrows cried,
Or midst the newly blossomed vines did stand,
And as the rustic weapon pressed the hand
Thought of the nodding of the well-filled ear,
Or how the knife the heavy bunch should shear.

Merry it was: about him sung the birds,
The spring flowers bloomed along the firm dry road,
The sleek-skinned mothers of the sharp-horned herds
Now for the barefoot milking-maidens lowed;
While from the freshness of his blue abode,
Glad his death-bearing arrows to forget,
The broad sun blazed, nor scattered plagues as yet.

Through such fair things unto the gates he came,
And found them open, as though peace were there;
Wherethrough, unquestioned of his race or name,
He entered, and along the streets 'gan fare,
Which at the first of folk were wellnigh bare;
But pressing on, and going more hastily,
Men hurrying too he 'gan at last to see.

Following the last of these, he still pressed on,
Until an open space he came unto,
Where wreaths of fame had oft been lost and won,
For feats of strength folk there were wont to do.
And now our hunter looked for something new,
Because the whole wide space was bare, and stilled
The high seats were, with eager people filled.

There with the others to a seat he gat,
Whence he beheld a broidered canopy,
'Neath which in fair array King Schœneus sat
Upon his throne with councilors thereby;
And underneath his well-wrought seat and high,
He saw a golden image of the sun,
A silver image of the fleet-foot one.

A brazen altar stood beneath their feet
Whereon a thin flame flickered in the wind;
Nigh this a herald clad in raiment meet
Made ready even now his horn to wind,
By whom a huge man held a sword, intwined
With yellow flowers; these stood a little space
From off the altar, nigh the starting-place.

And there two runners did the sign abide,
Foot set to foot,—a young man slim and fair,
Crisp-haired, well-knit, with firm limbs often tried
In places where no man his strength may spare;
Dainty his thin coat was, and on his hair
A golden circlet of renown he wore,
And in his hand an olive garland bore.

But on this day with whom shall he contend?
A maid stood by him like Diana clad
When in the woods she lists her bow to bend,
Too fair for one to look on and be glad,
Who scarcely yet has thirty summers had,
If he must still behold her from afar;
Too fair to let the world live free from war.

She seemed all earthly matters to forget;
Of all tormenting lines her face was clear,
Her wide gray eyes upon the goal were set
Calm and unmoved as though no soul were near.
But her foe trembled as a man in fear,
Nor from her loveliness one moment turned
His anxious face with fierce desire that burned.

Now through the hush there broke the trumpet's clang
Just as the setting sun made eventide.
Then from light feet a spurt of dust there sprang,
And swiftly were they running side by side;
But silent did the thronging folk abide
Until the turning-post was reached at last,
And round about it still abreast they passed.

But when the people saw how close they ran,
When half-way to the starting-point they were,
A cry of joy broke forth, whereat the man
Headed the white-foot runner, and drew near
Unto the very end of all his fear;
And scarce his straining feet the ground could feel,
And bliss unhoped-for o'er his heart 'gan steal.

But midst the loud victorious shouts he heard
Her footsteps drawing nearer, and the sound
Of fluttering raiment, and thereat afeard
His flushed and eager face he turned around,
And even then he felt her past him bound
Fleet as the wind, but scarcely saw her there
Till on the goal she laid her fingers fair.

There stood she breathing like a little child
Amid some warlike clamor laid asleep,

For no victorious joy her red lips smiled,
Her cheek its wonted freshness did but keep;
No glance lit up her clear gray eyes and deep,
Though some divine thought softened all her face
As once more rang the trumpet through the place.

But her late foe stopped short amidst his course,
One moment gazed upon her piteously,
Then with a groan his lingering feet did force
To leave the spot whence he her eyes could see;
And, changed like one who knows his time must be
But short and bitter, without any word
He knelt before the bearer of the sword;

Then high rose up the gleaming deadly blade,
Bared of its flowers, and through the crowded place
Was silence now, and midst of it the maid
Went by the poor wretch at a gentle pace,
And he to hers upturned his sad white face;
Nor did his eyes behold another sight
Ere on his soul there fell eternal night.

II

So was the pageant ended, and all folk
Talking of this and that familiar thing
In little groups from that sad concourse broke;
For now the shrill bats were upon the wing,
And soon dark night would slay the evening,
And in dark gardens sang the nightingale
Her little-heeded, oft-repeated tale.

And with the last of all the hunter went,
Who, wondering at the strange sight he had seen,
Prayed an old man to tell him what it meant,
Both why the vanquished man so slain had been,
And if the maiden were an earthly queen,
Or rather what much more she seemed to be,
No sharer in the world's mortality.

'Stranger,' said he, 'I pray she soon may die
Whose lovely youth has slain so many an one!
King Schœneus' daughter is she verily,
Who when her eyes first looked upon the sun
Was fain to end her life but new begun,
For he had vowed to leave but men alone
Sprung from his loins when he from earth was gone.

'Therefore he bade one leave her in the wood,
And let wild things deal with her as they might;
But this being done, some cruel god thought good
To save her beauty in the world's despite:
Folk say that her, so delicate and white
As now she is, a rough root-grubbing bear
Amidst her shapeless cubs at first did rear.

'In course of time the woodfolk slew her nurse,
And to their rude abode the youngling brought,
And reared her up to be a kingdom's curse,
Who, grown a woman, of no kingdom thought,
But armed and swift, mid beasts destruction wrought,
Nor spared two shaggy centaur kings to slay,
To whom her body seemed an easy prey.

'So to this city, led by fate, she came,
Whom, known by signs, whereof I cannot tell,
King Schœneus for his child at last did claim;
Nor otherwhere since that day doth she dwell,
Sending too many a noble soul to hell.—
What! thine eyes glisten? what then! thinkest thou
Her shining head unto the yoke to bow?

'Listen, my son, and love some other maid,
For she the saffron gown will never wear,
And on no flower-strewn couch shall she be laid,
Nor shall her voice make glad a lover's ear;
Yet if of Death thou hast not any fear,
Yea, rather, if thou lovest him utterly,
Thou still may'st woo her ere thou comest to die,

'Like him that on this day thou sawest lie dead;
For, fearing as I deem the sea-born one,
The maid has vowed e'en such a man to wed
As in the course her swift feet can outrun,
But whoso fails herein, his days are done:
He came the nighest that was slain to-day,
Although with him I deem she did but play.

'Behold, such mercy Atalanta gives
To those that long to win her loveliness;
Be wise! be sure that many a maid there lives
Gentler than she, of beauty little less,
Whose swimming eyes thy loving words shall bless,
When in some garden, knee set close to knee,
Thou sing'st the song that love may teach to thee.'

So to the hunter spake that ancient man,
And left him for his own home presently;
But he turned round, and through the moonlight wan
Reached the thick wood, and there 'twixt tree and tree
Distraught he passed the long night feverishly,
'Twixt sleep and waking, and at dawn arose
To wage hot war against his speechless foes.

There to the hart's flank seemed his shaft to grow,
As panting down the broad green glades he flew,
There by his horn the Dryads well might know
His thrust against the bear's heart had been true,
And there Adonis' bane his javelin slew;
But still in vain through rough and smooth he went,
For none the more his restlessness was spent.

So wandering, he to Argive cities came,
And in the lists with valiant men he stood,
And by great deeds he won him praise and fame,
And heaps of wealth for little-valued blood;
But none of all these things, or life, seemed good
Unto his heart, where still unsatisfied
A ravenous longing warred with fear and pride.

Therefore it happed when but a month had gone
Since he had left King Schœneus' city old,
In hunting-gear again, again alone
The forest-bordered meads did he behold,
Where still mid thoughts of August's quivering gold
Folk hoed the wheat, and clipped the vine in trust
Of faint October's purple-foaming must.

And once again he passed the peaceful gate,
While to his beating heart his lips did lie,
That, owning not victorious love and fate,
Said, half aloud, 'And here too must I try
To win of alien men the mastery,
And gather for my head fresh meed of fame,
And cast new glory on my father's name.'

In spite of that, how beat his heart when first
Folk said to him, 'And art thou come to see
That which still makes our city's name accurst
Among all mothers for its cruelty?
Then know indeed that fate is good to thee,
Because to-morrow a new luckless one
Against the white-foot maid is pledged to run.'

So on the morrow with no curious eyes,
As once he did, that piteous sight he saw,
Nor did that wonder in his heart arise
As toward the goal the conquering maid 'gan draw,
Nor did he gaze upon her eyes with awe,—
Too full the pain of longing filled his heart
For fear or wonder there to have a part.

But O, how long the night was ere it went!
How long it was before the dawn begun
Showed to the wakening birds the sun's intent
That not in darkness should the world be done!
And then, and then, how long before the sun
Bade silently the toilers of the earth
Get forth to fruitless cares or empty mirth!

And long it seemed that in the market-place

He stood and saw the chaffering folk go by,
Ere from the ivory throne King Schœneus' face
Looked down upon the murmur royally;
But then came trembling that the time was nigh
When he midst pitying looks his love must claim,
And jeering voices must salute his name.

But as the throng he pierced to gain the throne,
His alien face distraught and anxious told
What hopeless errand he was bound upon,
And, each to each, folk whispered to behold
His godlike limbs; nay, and one woman old,
As he went by, must pluck him by the sleeve
And pray him yet that wretched love to leave.

For sidling up she said, 'Canst thou live twice,
Fair son? Canst thou have joyful youth again,
That thus thou goest to the sacrifice,
Thyself the victim? Nay, then, all in vain
Thy mother bore her longing and her pain,
And one more maiden on the earth must dwell
Hopeless of joy, nor fearing death and hell.

'O fool, thou knowest not the compact then
That with the three-formed goddess she has made
To keep her from the loving lips of men,
And in no saffron gown to be arrayed,
And therewithal with glory to be paid,
And love of her the moonlit river sees
White 'gainst the shadow of the formless trees.

'Come back, and I myself will pray for thee
Unto the sea-born framer of delights,
To give thee her who on the earth may be
The fairest stirrer-up to death and fights,
To quench with hopeful days and joyous nights
The flame that doth thy youthful heart consume:
Come back, nor give thy beauty to the tomb.'

How should he listen to her earnest speech,—
Words such as he not once or twice had said
Unto himself, whose meaning scarce could reach
The firm abode of that sad hardihead?
He turned about, and through the market-stead
Swiftly he passed, until before the throne
In the cleared space he stood at last alone.

Then said the king, 'Stranger, what dost thou here?
Have any of my folk done ill to thee?
Or art thou of the forest men in fear?
Or art thou of the sad fraternity
Who still will strive my daughter's mates to be,
Staking their lives to win to earthly bliss
The lonely maid, the friend of Artemis?'

'O King,' he said, 'thou sayest the word indeed;
Nor will I quit the strife till I have won
My sweet delight, or death to end my need.
And know that I am called Milanion,
Of King Amphidamas the well-loved son;
So fear not that to thy old name, O King,
Much loss or shame my victory will bring.'

'Nay, Prince,' said Schœneus, 'welcome to this land
Thou wert indeed, if thou wert here to try
Thy strength 'gainst some one mighty of his hand;
Nor would we grudge thee well-won mastery.
But now, why wilt thou come to me to die,
And at my door lay down thy luckless head,
Swelling the band of the unhappy dead,

'Whose curses even now my heart doth fear?
Lo, I am old, and know what life can be,
And what a bitter thing is death anear.
O son! be wise, and hearken unto me;
And if no other can be dear to thee,
At least as now, yet is the world full wide,
And bliss in seeming hopeless hearts may hide:

'But if thou losest life, then all is lost.'
'Nay, King,' Milanion said, 'thy words are vain.
Doubt not that I have counted well the cost.
But say, on what day wilt thou that I gain

Fulfilled delight, or death to end my pain?
Right glad were I if it could be to-day,
And all my doubts at rest forever lay.'

'Nay,' said King Schœneus, 'thus it shall not be,
But rather shalt thou let a month go by,
And weary with thy prayers for victory
What god thou know'st the kindest and most nigh.
So doing, still perchance thou shalt not die;
And with my good-will wouldst thou have the maid,
For of the equal gods I grow afraid.

'And until then, O Prince, be thou my guest,
And all these troublous things awhile forget.
'Nay,' said he, 'couldst thou give my soul good rest,
And on mine head a sleepy garland set,
Then had I 'scaped the meshes of the net,
Nor shouldst thou hear from me another word;
But now, make sharp thy fearful heading sword.

'Yet will I do what son of man may do,
And promise all the gods may most desire,
That to myself I may at least be true;
And on that day my heart and limbs so tire,
With utmost strain and measureless desire,
That, at the worst, I may but fall asleep
When in the sunlight round that sword shall sweep.'

He went with that, nor anywhere would bide,
But unto Argos restlessly did wend;
And there, as one who lays all hope aside,
Because the leech has said his life must end,
Silent farewell he bade to foe and friend,
And took his way unto the restless sea,
For there he deemed his rest and help might be.

III

Upon the shore of Argolis there stands
A temple to the goddess that he sought,
That, turned unto the lion-bearing lands,
Fenced from the east, of cold winds hath no thought,
Though to no homestead there the sheaves are brought,
No groaning press torments the close-clipped murk,
Lonely the fane stands, far from all men's work.

Pass through a close, set thick with myrtle-trees,
Through the brass doors that guard the holy place,
And, entering, hear the washing of the seas
That twice a day rise high above the base,
And, with the southwest urging them, embrace
The marble feet of her that standeth there,
That shrink not, naked though they be and fair.

Small is the fane through which the sea-wind sings
About Queen Venus' well-wrought image white;
But hung around are many precious things,
The gifts of those who, longing for delight,
Have hung them there within the goddess' sight,
And in return have taken at her hands
The living treasures of the Grecian lands.

And thither now has come Milanion,
And showed unto the priests' wide-open eyes
Gifts fairer than all those that there have shown,—
Silk cloths, inwrought with Indian fantasies,
And bowls inscribed with sayings of the wise
Above the deeds of foolish living things,
And mirrors fit to be the gifts of kings.

And now before the sea-born one he stands,
By the sweet veiling smoke made dim and soft;
And while the incense trickles from his hands,
And while the odorous smoke-wreaths hang aloft,
Thus doth he pray to her: 'O thou who oft
Hast holpen man and maid in their distress,
Despise me not for this my wretchedness!

'O goddess, among us who dwell below,
Kings and great men, great for a little while,
Have pity on the lowly heads that bow,

Nor hate the hearts that love them without guile;
Wilt thou be worse than these, and is thy smile
A vain device of him who set thee here,
An empty dream of some artificer?

'O great one, some men love, and are ashamed;
Some men are weary of the bonds of love;
Yea, and by some men lightly art thou blamed,
That from thy toils their lives they cannot move,
And mind the ranks of men their manhood prove.
Alas! O goddess, if thou slayest me
What new immortal can I serve but thee?

'Think then, will it bring honor to thy head
If folk say, "Everything aside he cast,
And to all fame and honor was he dead,
And to his one hope now is dead at last,
Since all unholpen he is gone and past:
Ah! the gods love not man, for certainly
He to his helper did not cease to cry."

'Nay, but thou wilt help: they who died before
Not single-hearted, as I deem, came here;
Therefore unthanked they laid their gifts before
Thy stainless feet, still shivering with their fear,
Lest in their eyes their true thought might appear,
Who sought to be the lords of that fair town,
Dreaded of men and winners of renown.

'O Queen, thou knowest I pray not for this:
O, set us down together in some place
Where not a voice can break our heaven of bliss,
Where naught but rocks and I can see her face,
Softening beneath the marvel of thy grace,
Where not a foot our vanished steps can track,—
The golden age, the golden age come back!

'O fairest, hear me now, who do thy will,
Plead for thy rebel that she be not slain,
But live and love and be thy servant still:
Ah! give her joy and take away my pain,
And thus two long-enduring servants gain.
An easy thing this is to do for me,
What need of my vain words to weary thee?

'But none the less this place will I not leave
Until I needs must go my death to meet,
Or at thy hands some happy sign receive
That in great joy we twain may one day greet
Thy presence here and kiss thy silver feet,
Such as we deem thee, fair beyond all words,
Victorious o'er our servants and our lords.'

Then from the altar back a space he drew,
But from the queen turned not his face away,
But 'gainst a pillar leaned, until the blue
That arched the sky, at ending of the day,
Was turned to ruddy gold and changing gray,
And clear, but low, the nigh-ebbed windless sea
In the still evening murmured ceaselessly.

And there he stood when all the sun was down;
Nor had he moved when the dim golden light,
Like the far luster of a godlike town,
Had left the world to seeming hopeless night;
Nor would he move the more when wan moonlight
Streamed through the pillars for a little while,
And lighted up the white queen's changeless smile.

Naught noted he the shallow flowing sea,
As step by step it set the wrack a-swim;
The yellow torchlight nothing noted he
Wherein with fluttering gown and half-bared limb
The temple damsels sung their midnight hymn;
And naught the doubled stillness of the fane
When they were gone and all was hushed again.

But when the waves had touched the marble base,
And steps the fish swim over twice a day,
The dawn beheld him sunken in his place
Upon the floor; and sleeping there he lay,
Not heeding aught the little jets of spray

The roughened sea brought nigh, across him cast,
For as one dead all thought from him had passed.

Yet long before the sun had showed his head,
Long ere the varied hangings on the wall
Had gained once more their blue and green and red,
He rose as one some well-known sign doth call
When war upon the city's gates doth fall,
And scarce like one fresh risen out of sleep,
He 'gan again his broken watch to keep.

Then he turned round; not for the sea-gull's cry
That wheeled above the temple in his flight,
Not for the fresh south-wind that lovingly
Breathed on the new-born day and dying night,
But some strange hope 'twixt fear and great delight
Drew round his face, now flushed, now pale and wan,
And still constrained his eyes the sea to scan.

Now a faint light lit up the southern sky,—
Not sun or moon, for all the world was gray,
But this a bright cloud seemed, that drew anigh,
Lighting the dull waves that beneath it lay
As toward the temple still it took its way,
And still grew greater, till Milanion
Saw naught for dazzling light that round him shone.

But as he staggered with his arms outspread,
Delicious unnamed odors breathed around;
For languid happiness he bowed his head,
And with wet eyes sank down upon the ground,
Nor wished for aught, nor any dream he found
To give him reason for that happiness,
Or make him ask more knowledge of his bliss.

At last his eyes were cleared, and he could see
Through happy tears the goddess face to face
With that faint image of divinity,
Whose well-wrought smile and dainty changeless grace
Until that morn so gladdened all the place;
Then he unwitting cried aloud her name,
And covered up his eyes for fear and shame.

But through the stillness he her voice could hear
Piercing his heart with joy scarce bearable,
That said, 'Milanion, wherefore dost thou fear?
I am not hard to those who love me well;
List to what I a second time will tell,
And thou mayest hear perchance, and live to save
The cruel maiden from a loveless grave.

'See, by my feet three golden apples lie,—
Such fruit among the heavy roses falls,
Such fruit my watchful damsels carefully
Store up within the best loved of my walls,
Ancient Damascus, where the lover calls
Above my unseen head, and faint and light
The rose-leaves flutter round me in the night.

'And note that these are not alone most fair
With heavenly gold, but longing strange they bring
Unto the hearts of men, who will not care,
Beholding these, for any once-loved thing
Till round the shining sides their fingers cling.
And thou shalt see thy well-girt swiftfoot maid
By sight of these amid her glory stayed.

'For bearing these within a scrip with thee,
When first she heads thee from the starting-place
Cast down the first one for her eyes to see,
And when she turns aside make on apace,
And if again she heads thee in the race
Spare not the other two to cast aside
If she not long enough behind will bide.

'Farewell, and when has come the happy time
That she Diana's raiment must unbind,
And all the world seems blessed with Saturn's clime,
And thou with eager arms about her twined
Beholdest first her gray eyes growing kind,
Surely, O trembler, thou shalt scarcely then
Forget the helper of unhappy men.'

Milanion raised his head at this last word,
For now so soft and kind she seemed to be
No longer of her godhead was he feared;
Too late he looked, for nothing could he see
But the white image glimmering doubtfully
In the departing twilight cold and gray,
And those three apples on the steps that lay.

These then he caught up, quivering with delight,
Yet fearful lest it all might be a dream,
And though aweary with the watchful night,
And sleepless nights of longing, still did deem
He could not sleep; but yet the first sunbeam
That smote the fane across the heaving deep
Shone on him laid in calm untroubled sleep.

But little ere the noontide did he rise,
And why he felt so happy scarce could tell
Until the gleaming apples met his eyes.
Then, leaving the fair place where this befell,
Oft he looked back as one who loved it well,
Then homeward to the haunts of men 'gan wend
To bring all things unto a happy end.

IV

Now has the lingering month at last gone by,
Again are all folk around the running-place.
Nor other seems the dismal pageantry
Than heretofore, but that another face
Looks o'er the smooth course ready for the race,
For now, beheld of all, Milanion
Stands on the spot he twice has looked upon.

But yet — what change is this that holds the maid?
Does she indeed see in his glittering eye
More than disdain of the sharp shearing blade,
Some happy hope of help and victory?
The others seemed to say, 'We come to die;
Look down upon us for a little while,
That, dead, we may bethink us of thy smile.'

But he — what look of mastery was this
He cast on her? Why were his lips so red?
Why was his face so flushed with happiness?
So looks not one who deems himself but dead,
E'en if to death he bows a willing head;
So rather looks a god well pleased to find
Some earthly damsel fashioned to his mind.

Why must she drop her lids before his gaze,
And even as she casts adown her eyes
Redden to note his eager glance of praise,
And wish that she were clad in other guise?
Why must the memory to her heart arise
Of things unnoticed when they first were heard,
Some lover's song, some answering maiden's word?

What makes these longings, vague, without a name,
And this vain pity never felt before,
This sudden languor, this contempt of fame,
This tender sorrow for the time past o'er,
These doubts that grow each minute more and more?
Why does she tremble as the time grows near,
And weak defeat and woful victory fear?

But while she seemed to hear her beating heart,
Above their heads the trumpet blast rang out,
And forth they sprang; and she must play her part.
Then flew her white feet, knowing not a doubt,
Though, slackening once, she turned her head about,
But then she cried aloud and faster fled
Than e'er before, and all men deemed him dead.

But with no sound he raised aloft his hand,
And thence what seemed a ray of light there flew
And past the maid rolled on along the sand;
Then trembling she her feet together drew,
And in her heart a strong desire there grew
To have the toy: some god she thought had given
That gift to her, to make of earth a heaven.

Then from the course with eager steps she ran,
And in her odorous bosom laid the gold.
But when she turned again, the great-limbed man
Now well ahead she failed not to behold,
And, mindful of her glory waxing cold,
Sprang up and followed him in hot pursuit,
Though with one hand she touched the golden fruit.

Note, too, the bow that she was wont to bear
She laid aside to grasp the glittering prize,
And o'er her shoulder from the quiver fair
Three arrows fell and lay before her eyes
Unnoticed, as amidst the people's cries
She sprang to head the strong Milanion,
Who now the turning-post had wellnigh won.

But as he set his mighty hand on it,
White fingers underneath his own were laid,
And white limbs from his dazzled eyes did flit;
Then he the second fruit cast by the maid,
But she ran on awhile, then as afraid
Wavered and stopped, and turned and made no stay
Until the globe with its bright fellow lay.

Then, as a troubled glance she cast around,
Now far ahead the Argive could she see,
And in her garment's hem one hand she wound
To keep the double prize, and strenuously
Sped o'er the course, and little doubt had she
To win the day, though now but scanty space
Was left betwixt him and the winning-place.

Short was the way unto such wingèd feet;
Quickly she gained upon him, till at last
He turned about her eager eyes to meet,
And from his hand the third fair apple cast.
She wavered not, but turned and ran so fast
After the prize that should her bliss fulfil,
That in her hand it lay ere it was still.

Nor did she rest, but turned about to win
Once more an unblest woful victory —
And yet — and yet — why does her breath begin
To fail her, and her feet drag heavily?
Why fails she now to see if far or nigh
The goal is? Why do her gray eyes grow dim?
Why do these tremors run through every limb?

She spreads her arms abroad some stay to find,
Else must she fall, indeed, and findeth this,
A strong man's arms about her body twined.
Nor may she shudder now to feel his kiss,
So wrapped she is in new unbroken bliss;
Made happy that the foe the prize hath won,
She weeps glad tears for all her glory done.

V

Shatter the trumpet, hew adown the posts!
Upon the brazen altar break the sword,
And scatter incense to appease the ghosts
Of those who died here by their own award.
Bring forth the image of the mighty lord,
And her who unseen o'er the runners hung,
And did a deed forever to be sung.

Here are the gathered folk; make no delay,
Open King Schœneus' well-filled treasury,
Bring out the gifts long hid from light of day,—
The golden bowls o'erwrought with imagery
Gold chains, and unguents brought from over sea,
The saffron gown the old Phœnician brought,
Within the temple of the goddess wrought.

O ye, O damsels, who shall never see
Her, that Love's servant bringeth now to you,
Returning from another victory,
In some cool bower do all that now is due!
Since she in token of her service new
Shall give to Venus offerings rich enow,—
Her maiden zone, her arrows, and her bow.

THE LADY OF THE LAND

A certain man having landed on an island in the Greek Sea, found there a beautiful damsel, whom he would fain have delivered from a strange and dreadful doom, but failing herein, he died soon afterwards.

It happened once, some men of Italy
Midst the Greek Islands went a sea-roving,
And much good fortune had they on the sea:

Of many a man they had the ransoming,
And many a chain they gat, and goodly thing;
And midst their voyage to an isle they came,
Whereof my story keepeth not the name.

Now though but little was there left to gain,
Because the richer folk had gone away,
Yet since by this of water they were fain
They came to anchor in a land-locked bay,
Whence in a while some went ashore to play,
Going but lightly armed in twos or threes,
For midst that folk they feared no enemies.

And of these fellows that thus went ashore,
One was there who left all his friends behind;
Who going inland ever more and more,
And being left quite alone, at last did find
A lonely valley sheltered from the wind,
Wherein, amidst an ancient cypress wood,
A long-deserted ruined castle stood.

The wood, once ordered in fair grove and glade,
With gardens overlooked by terraces,
And marble-pavèd pools for pleasure made,
Was tangled now, and choked with fallen trees;
And he who went there, with but little ease
Must stumble by the stream's side, once made meet
For tender women's dainty wandering feet.

The raven's croak, the low wind choked and drear,
The baffled stream, the gray wolf's doleful cry,
Were all the sounds that mariner could hear,
As through the wood he wandered painfully;
But as unto the house he drew anigh,
The pillars of a ruined shrine he saw,
The once fair temple of a fallen law.

No image was there left behind to tell
Before whose face the knees of men had bowed;
An altar of black stone, of old wrought well,
Alone beneath a ruined roof now showed
The goal whereto the folk were wont to crowd,
Seeking for things forgotten long ago,
Praying for heads long ages laid a-low.

Close to the temple was the castle-gate,
Doorless and crumbling; there our fellow turned,
Trembling indeed at what might chance to wait
The prey entrapped, yet with a heart that burned
To know the most of what might there be learned,
And hoping somewhat too, amid his fear,
To light on such things as all men hold dear.

Noble the house was, nor seemed built for war,
But rather like the work of other days,
When men, in better peace than now they are,
Had leisure on the world around to gaze,
And noted well the past times' changing ways;
And fair with sculptured stories it was wrought,
By lapse of time unto dim ruin brought.

Now as he looked about on all these things,
And strove to read the moldering histories,
Above the door an image with wide wings,
Whose unclad limbs a serpent seemed to seize,
He dimly saw, although the western breeze,
And years of biting frost and washing rain,
Had made the carver's labor well-nigh vain.

But this, though perished sore, and worn away,
He noted well, because it seemed to be,
After the fashion of another day,
Some great man's badge of war, or armory;
And round it a carved wreath he seemed to see:
But taking note of these things, at the last
The mariner beneath the gateway passed.

And there a lovely cloistered court he found,
A fountain in the midst o'erthrown and dry,
And in the cloister briers twining round
The slender shafts; the wondrous imagery
Outworn by more than many years gone by;
Because the country people, in their fear
Of wizardry, had wrought destruction here:

And piteously these fair things had been maimed;
There stood great Jove, lacking his head of might;
Here was the archer, swift Apollo, lamed;

The shapely limbs of Venus hid from sight
By weeds and shards; Diana's ankles light
Bound with the cable of some coasting ship;
And rusty nails through Helen's maddening lip.

Therefrom unto the chambers did he pass,
And found them fair still, midst of their decay,
Though in them now no sign of man there was,
And everything but stone had passed away
That made them lovely in that vanished day;
Nay, the mere walls themselves would soon be gone
And naught be left but heaps of moldering stone.

But he, when all the place he had gone o'er,
And with much trouble clomb the broken stair,
And from the topmost turret seen the shore
And his good ship drawn up at anchor there,
Came down again, and found a crypt most fair
Built wonderfully beneath the greatest hall,
And there he saw a door within the wall,

Well-hinged, close shut; nor was there in that place
Another on its hinges, therefore he
Stood there and pondered for a little space,
And thought, 'Perchance some marvel I shall see,
For surely here some dweller there must be,
Because this door seems whole, and new, and sound,
While naught but ruin I can see around.'

So with that word, moved by a strong desire,
He tried the hasp, that yielded to his hand,
And in a strange place, lit as by a fire
Unseen but near, he presently did stand;
And by an odorous breeze his face was fanned,
As though in some Arabian plain he stood,
Anigh the border of a spice-tree wood.

He moved not for awhile, but looking round,
He wondered much to see the place so fair,
Because, unlike the castle above ground,
No pillager or wrecker had been there;
It seemed that time had passed on otherwhere,
Nor laid a finger on this hidden place,
Rich with the wealth of some forgotten race.

With hangings, fresh as when they left the loom,
The walls were hung a space above the head,
Slim ivory chairs were set about the room,
And in one corner was a dainty bed,
That seemed for some fair queen apparelèd;
And marble was the worst stone of the floor,
That with rich Indian webs was covered o'er.

The wanderer trembled when he saw all this,
Because he deemed by magic it was wrought;
Yet in his heart a longing for some bliss,
Whereof the hard and changing world knows naught,
Arose and urged him on, and dimmed the thought
That there perchance some devil lurked to slay
The heedless wanderer from the light of day.

Over against him was another door
Set in the wall; so, casting fear aside,
With hurried steps he crossed the varied floor,
And there again the silver latch he tried
And with no pain the door he opened wide,
And entering the new chamber cautiously
The glory of great heaps of gold could see.

Upon the floor uncounted medals lay,
Like things of little value; here and there
Stood golden caldrons, that might well outweigh
The biggest midst an emperor's copper-ware,
And golden cups were set on tables fair,
Themselves of gold; and in all hollow things
Were stored great gems, worthy the crowns of kings.

The walls and roof with gold were overlaid,
And precious raiment from the wall hung down;
The fall of kings that treasure might have stayed,
Or gained some longing conqueror great renown,

Or built again some god-destroyed old town;
What wonder, if this plunderer of the sea
Stood gazing at it long and dizzily?

But at the last his troubled eyes and dazed
He lifted from the glory of that gold,
And then the image, that well-nigh erased
Over the castle-gate he did behold,
Above a door well wrought in colored gold
Again he saw; a naked girl with wings
Enfolded in a serpent's scaly rings.

And even as his eyes were fixed on it
A woman's voice came from the other side,
And through his heart strange hopes began to flit
That in some wondrous land he might abide
Not dying, master of a deathless bride,
So o'er the gold he scarcely now could see
He went, and passed this last door eagerly.

Then in a room he stood wherein there was
A marble bath, whose brimming water yet
Was scarcely still; a vessel of green glass
Half full of odorous ointment was there set
Upon the topmost step that still was wet,
And jeweled shoes and women's dainty gear,
Lay cast upon the varied pavement near.

In one quick glance these things his eyes did see,
But speedily they turned round to behold
Another sight, for throned on ivory
There sat a girl, whose dripping tresses rolled
On to the floor in waves of gleaming gold,
Cast back from such a form as, erewhile shown
To one poor shepherd, lighted up Troy town.

Naked she was, the kisses of her feet
Upon the floor a dying path had made
From the full bath unto her ivory seat;
In her right hand, upon her bosom laid,
She held a golden comb, a mirror weighed
Her left hand down, aback her fair head lay
Dreaming awake of some long vanished day.

Her eyes were shut, but she seemed not to sleep,
Her lips were murmuring things unheard and low,
Or sometimes twitched as though she needs must weep
Though from her eyes the tears refused to flow,
And oft with heavenly red her cheek did glow,
As if remembrance of some half-sweet shame
Across the web of many memories came.

There stood the man, scarce daring to draw breath
For fear the lovely sight should fade away;
Forgetting heaven, forgetting life and death,
Trembling for fear lest something he should say
Unwitting, lest some sob should yet betray
His presence there, for to his eager eyes
Already did the tears begin to rise.

But as he gazed, she moved, and with a sigh
Bent forward, dropping down her golden head;
'Alas, alas! another day gone by,
Another day and no soul come,' she said;
'Another year, and still I am not dead!'
And with that word once more her head she raised,
And on the trembling man with great eyes gazed.

Then he imploring hands to her did reach,
And toward her very slowly 'gan to move
And with wet eyes her pity did beseech,
And seeing her about to speak, he strove
From trembling lips to utter words of love;
But with a look she stayed his doubtful feet,
And made sweet music as their eyes did meet.

For now she spoke in gentle voice and clear,
Using the Greek tongue that he knew full well;
'What man art thou, that thus hast wandered here,
And found this lonely chamber where I dwell?
Beware, beware! for I have many a spell;
If greed of power and gold have led thee on,
Not lightly shall this untold wealth be won.

'But if thou com'st here, knowing of my tale,

In hope to bear away my body fair,
Stout must thine heart be, nor shall that avail
If thou a wicked soul in thee dost bear;
So once again I bid thee to beware,
Because no base man things like this may see,
And live thereafter long and happily.'

'Lady,' he said, 'in Florence is my home,
And in my city noble is my name;
Neither on peddling voyage am I come,
But, like my fathers, bent to gather fame;
And though thy face has set my heart a-flame
Yet of thy story nothing do I know,
But here have wandered heedlessly enow.

'But since the sight of thee mine eyes did bless,
What can I be but thine? what wouldst thou have?
From those thy words, I deem from some distress
By deeds of mine thy dear life I might save;
O then, delay not! if one ever gave
His life to any, mine I give to thee;
Come, tell me what the price of love must be?

'Swift death, to be with thee a day and night
And with the earliest dawning to be slain?
Or better, a long year of great delight,
And many years of misery and pain?
Or worse, and this poor hour for all my gain?
A sorry merchant am I on this day,
E'en as thou willest so must I obey.'

She said, 'What brave words! naught divine am I,
But an unhappy and unheard-of maid
Compelled by evil fate and destiny
To live, who long ago should have been laid
Under the earth within the cypress shade.
Hearken awhile, and quickly shalt thou know
What deed I pray thee to accomplish now.

'God grant indeed thy words are not for naught!
Then shalt thou save me, since for many a day
To such a dreadful life I have been brought:
Nor will I spare with all my heart to pay
What man soever takes my grief away;
Ah! I will love thee, if thou lovest me
But well enough my savior now to be.

'My father lived a many years agone
Lord of this land, master of all cunning,
Who ruddy gold could draw from out gray stone,
And gather wealth from many an uncouth thing;
He made the wilderness rejoice and sing,
And such a leech he was that none could say
Without his word what soul should pass away.

'Unto Diana such a gift he gave,
Goddess above, below, and on the earth,
That I should be her virgin and her slave
From the first hour of my most wretched birth;
Therefore my life had known but little mirth
When I had come unto my twentieth year
And the last time of hallowing drew anear.

'So in her temple had I lived and died
And all would long ago have passed away,
But ere that time came, did strange things betide,
Whereby I am alive unto this day;
Alas, the bitter words that I must say!
Ah! can I bring my wretched tongue to tell
How I was brought unto this fearful hell?

'A queen I was, what gods I knew I loved,
And nothing evil was there in my thought,
And yet by love my wretched heart was moved
Until to utter ruin I was brought!
Alas! thou sayest our gods were vain and naught;
Wait, wait, till thou hast heard this tale of mine,
Then shalt thou think them devilish or divine.

'Hearken! in spite of father and of vow
I loved a man; but for that sin I think
Men had forgiven me — yea, yea, even thou;
But from the gods the full cup must I drink,
And into misery unheard of sink,
Tormented, when their own names are forgot,
And men must doubt if they e'er lived or not.

'Glorious my lover was unto my sight,
Most beautiful,— of love we grew so fain
That we at last agreed, that on a night
We should be happy, but that he were slain
Or shut in hold; and neither joy nor pain
Should else forbid that hoped-for time to be;
So came the night that made a wretch of me.

'Ah! well do I remember all that night,
When through the window shone the orb of June,
And by the bed flickered the taper's light,
Whereby I trembled, gazing at the moon:
Ah me! the meeting that we had, when soon
Into his strong, well-trusted arms I fell,
And many a sorrow we began to tell.

'Ah me! what parting on that night we had!
I think the story of my great despair
A little while might merry folk make sad;
For, as he swept away my yellow hair
To make my shoulder and my bosom bare,
I raised mine eyes, and shuddering could behold
A shadow cast upon the bed of gold:

'Then suddenly was quenched my hot desire
And he untwined his arms; the moon so pale
A while ago, seemed changed to blood and fire,
And yet my limbs beneath me did not fail,
And neither had I strength to cry or wail,
But stood there helpless, bare, and shivering,
With staring eyes still fixed upon the thing.

'Because the shade that on the bed of gold
The changed and dreadful moon was throwing down
Was of Diana, whom I did behold,
With knotted hair, and shining girt-up gown,
And on the high white brow, a deadly frown
Bent upon us, who stood scarce drawing breath,
Striving to meet the horrible sure death.

'No word at all the dreadful goddess said,
But soon across my feet my lover lay,
And well indeed I knew that he was dead;
And would that I had died on that same day!
For in a while the image turned away,
And without words my doom I understood,
And felt a horror change my human blood.

'And there I fell, and on the floor I lay
By the dead man, till daylight came on me,
And not a word thenceforward could I say
For three years; till of grief and misery,
The lingering pest, the cruel enemy,
My father and his folk were dead and gone,
And in this castle I was left alone:

'And then the doom foreseen upon me fell,
For Queen Diana did my body change
Into a fork-tongued dragon, flesh and fell,
And through the island nightly do I range,
Or in the green sea mate with monsters strange,
When in the middle of the moonlit night
The sleepy mariner I do affright.

'But all day long upon this gold I lie
Within this place, where never mason's hand
Smote trowel on the marble noisily;
Drowsy I lie, no folk at my command,
Who once was called the Lady of the Land;
Who might have bought a kingdom with a kiss,
Yea, half the world with such a sight as this.'

And therewithal, with rosy fingers light,
Backward her heavy-hanging hair she threw,
To give her naked beauty more to sight;
But when, forgetting all the things he knew,
Maddened with love unto the prize he drew,
She cried, 'Nay, wait! for wherefore wilt thou die,
Why should we not be happy, thou and I?

'Wilt thou not save me? once in every year
This rightful form of mine that thou dost see
By favor of the goddess have I here
From sunrise unto sunset given me,
That some brave man may end my misery.
And thou — art thou not brave? can thy heart fail,
Whose eyes e'en now are weeping at my tale?

'Then listen! when this day is overpast,
A fearful monster shall I be again,
And thou may'st be my savior at the last;
Unless, once more, thy words are naught and vain.
If thou of love and sovereignty art fain,
Come thou next morn, and when thou seest here
A hideous dragon, have thereof no fear,

'But take the loathsome head up in thine hands,
And kiss it, and be master presently
Of twice the wealth that is in all the lands
From Cathay to the head of Italy;
And master also, if it pleaseth thee,
Of all thou praisest as so fresh and bright,
Of what thou callest crown of all delight.

'Ah! with what joy then shall I see again
The sunlight on the green grass and the trees,
And hear the clatter of the summer rain,
And see the joyous folk beyond the seas.
Ah, me! to hold my child upon my knees,
After the weeping of unkindly tears,
And all the wrongs of these four hundred years.

'Go now, go quick! leave this gray heap of stone;
And from thy glad heart think upon thy way,
How I shall love thee — yea, love thee alone,
That bringest me from dark death unto day;
For this shall be thy wages and thy pay;
Unheard-of wealth, unheard-of love is near,
If thou hast heart a little dread to bear.'

Therewith she turned to go; but he cried out,
'Ah! wilt thou leave me then without one kiss,
To slay the very seeds of fear and doubt,
That glad to-morrow may bring certain bliss?
Hast thou forgotten how love lives by this,
The memory of some hopeful close embrace,
Low whispered words within some lonely place?'

But she, when his bright glittering eyes she saw,
And burning cheeks, cried out, 'Alas, alas!
Must I be quite undone, and wilt thou draw
A worse fate on me than the first one was?
O haste thee from this fatal place to pass!
Yet, ere thou goest, take this, lest thou shouldst deem
Thou hast been fooled by some strange mid-day dream.'

So saying, blushing like a new-kissed maid,
From off her neck a little gem she drew,
That, 'twixt those snowy rose-tinged hillocks laid,
The secrets of her glorious beauty knew;
And ere he well perceived what she would do,
She touched his hand, the gem within it lay,
And, turning, from his sight she fled away.

Then at the doorway where her rosy heel
Had glanced and vanished, he awhile did stare,
And still upon his hand he seemed to feel
The varying kisses of her fingers fair;
Then turned he toward the dreary crypt and bare,
And dizzily throughout the castle passed,
Till by the ruined fane he stood at last.

Then weighing still the gem within his hand,
He stumbled backward through the cypress wood,
Thinking the while of some strange lovely land,
Where all his life should be most fair and good
Till on the valley's wall of hills he stood,
And slowly thence passed down unto the bay
Red with the death of that bewildering day.

The next day came, and he, who all the night
Had ceaselessly been turning in his bed,
Arose and clad himself in armor bright,
And many a danger he remembered;
Storming of towns, lone sieges full of dread,
That with renown his heart had borne him through
And this thing seemed a little thing to do.

So on he went, and on the way he thought
Of all the glorious things of yesterday,
Naught of the price whereat they must be bought,
But ever to himself did softly say,
'No roaming now, my wars are passed away;

No long dull days devoid of happiness,
When such a love my yearning heart shall bless.'

Thus to the castle did he come at last,
But when unto the gateway he drew near,
And underneath its ruined archway passed
Into a court, a strange noise did he hear,
And through his heart there shot a pang of fear;
Trembling, he gat his sword into his hand,
And midmost of the cloisters took his stand.

But for a while that unknown noise increased,
A rattling, that with strident roars did blend,
And whining moans; but suddenly it ceased,
A fearful thing stood at the cloister's end,
And eyed him for a while, then 'gan to wend
Adown the cloisters, and began again
That rattling, and the moan like fiends in pain.

And as it came on towards him, with its teeth
The body of a slain goat did it tear,
The blood whereof in its hot jaws did seethe,
And on its tongue he saw the smoking hair;
Then his heart sank, and standing trembling there,
Throughout his mind wild thoughts and fearful ran,
'Some fiend she was,' he said, 'the bane of man.'

Yet he abode her still, although his blood
Curdled within him: the thing dropped the goat,
And creeping on, came close to where he stood,
And raised its head to him, and wrinkled throat,
Then he cried out and wildly at her smote,
Shutting his eyes, and turned and from the place
Ran swiftly, with a white and ghastly face.

But little things rough stones and tree-trunks seemed,
And if he fell, he rose and ran on still;
No more he felt his hurts than if he dreamed,
He made no stay for valley or steep hill,
Heedless he dashed through many a foaming rill,
Until he came unto the ship at last
And with no word into the deep hold passed.

Meanwhile the dragon, seeing him clean gone,
Followed him not, but crying horribly,
Caught up within her jaws a block of stone
And ground it into powder, then turned she,
With cries that folk could hear far out at sea,
And reached the treasure set apart of old,
To brood above the hidden heaps of gold.

Yet was she seen again on many a day
By some half-waking mariner, or herd,
Playing amid the ripples of the bay,
Or on the hills making all things afeard,
Or in the wood, that did that castle gird,
But never any man again durst go
To seek her woman's form, and end her woe.

As for the man, who knows what things he bore?
What mournful faces peopled the sad night,
What wailings vexed him with reproaches sore,
What images of that nigh-gained delight!
What dreamed caresses from soft hands and white,
Turning to horrors ere they reached the best;
What struggles vain, what shame, what huge unrest?

No man he knew, three days he lay and raved,
And cried for death, until a lethargy
Fell on him, and his fellows thought him saved;
But on the third night he awoke to die;
And at Byzantium doth his body lie
Between two blossoming pomegranate trees,
Within the churchyard of the Genoese.

(1868)

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE (1837–1909)

The poet's parents were Admiral Charles Henry Swinburne and Lady Henrietta Jane, daughter of the third Earl of Ashburnham. After a schooling of five years at Eton, Swinburne went to Balliol College, Oxford, where he contributed prose and verse to *Undergraduate Papers*, distinguished himself in Latin, Greek, French, and Italian, and began friendships with William Morris, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Edward Burne-Jones. After leaving Oxford, in 1860, he traveled on the continent, visiting Landor in Florence. The greater part of his life Swinburne spent quietly in England. After living for a time in London, with the Rossetti brothers, he retired to spend most of his later years at Putney Hill.

Swinburne first distinguished himself in literature as a dramatist, by the publication of *Rosamond* (1860), *The Queen Mother* (1860), *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865), and *Chastelard* (1865). By the publication of *Poems and Ballads* (1866), he aroused a moral commotion that has never been equaled in the history of English literature. To his assailants,—some of whom admired his rhythmical mastery as genuinely as they deprecated his unbridled utterances of passion,— Swinburne replied scornfully in *Notes on Poems and Reviews* (1866). The huge volume of Swinburne's poetical production, in which the lapses from lyrical and dramatic power are only occasional, is best represented by such publications as *Songs before Sunrise* (1871), *Bothwell: a Tragedy* (1874), *Erechtheus* (1876), *Studies in Song* (1880), *Mary Stuart: a Tragedy* (1881), *Tristram of Lyonesse, and Other Poems* (1882), *The Tale of Balen* (1896), and *A Channel Passage, and Other Poems* (1904). Swinburne's achievement in poetry, moreover, did not prevent his attaining a firm place in prose, chiefly through his critical studies of Elizabethan dramatists, such as *George Chapman* (1875), *A Study of Shakspere* (1880), *A Study of Ben Jonson* (1889), and *The Age of Shakspere* (1908).

Swineburne's earlier poems expressed, no doubt, a definite defiance of established social, political, and religious conventions that probably prevented, ultimately, his succession to the laureateship upon the death of Tennyson. His later poems are less defiant, and contain a more incisive appreciation of nature and more narrative charm. The severest of Swinburne's critics have never questioned his absolute mastery of the rhythmical possibilities of the English language, a mastery that resulted in his most serious poetical defect,—the substitution, in some cases, of a superb sonorousness for genuine ideas.

CHORUSES FROM ATALANTA IN CALYDON

CHORUS

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
  The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
  With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for **Itylus**,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
  The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,
  Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many rivers,
  With a clamor of waters, and with might;
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendor and speed of thy feet;
For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers,
  Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,
  Fold our hands round her knees, and cling?
O that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her,
  Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring!
For the stars and the winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;

For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,
And the southwest-wind, and the west-wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that wins;
And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood and cover
Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
Ripe grasses trammel a traveling foot,
The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes
From leaf to flower and flower to fruit;
And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,
And the oat is heard above the lyre,
And the hoofèd heel of a satyr crushes
The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
Follows with dancing and fills with delight
The Mænad and the Bassarid;
And soft as lips that laugh and hide
The laughing leaves of the trees divide,
And screen from seeing and leave in sight
The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes;
The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
Her bright breast shortening into sighs;
The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,
But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare
The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies.

CHORUS

Before the beginning of years
There came to the making of man
Time, with a gift of tears;
Grief, with a glass that ran;
Pleasure, with pain for leaven;
Summer, with flowers that fell;
Remembrance fallen from heaven,
And madness risen from hell;
Strength without hands to smite;
Love that endures for a breath;
Night, the shadow of light,
And life, the shadow of death.

And the high gods took in hand
Fire, and the falling of tears,
And a measure of sliding sand
From under the feet of the years
And froth and drift of the sea;
And dust of the laboring earth;
And bodies of things to be
In the houses of death and of birth;
And wrought with weeping and laughter,
And fashioned with loathing and love,
With life before and after
And death beneath and above,
For a day and a night and a morrow,
That his strength might endure for a span
With travail and heavy sorrow,
The holy spirit of man.

From the winds of the north and the south
They gathered as unto strife;
They breathed upon his mouth,
They filled his body with life;
Eyesight and speech they wrought
For the veils of the soul therein,
A time for labor and thought,
A time to serve and to sin;
They gave him light in his ways,
And love, and a space for delight,
And beauty and length of days,
And night, and sleep in the night.
His speech is a burning fire;
With his lips he travaileth;
In his heart is a blind desire,
In his eyes foreknowledge of death;
He weaves, and is clothed with derision;
Sows, and he shall not reap;
His life is a watch or a vision
Between a sleep and a sleep.

CHORUS

We have seen thee, O Love, thou art fair;
thou art goodly, O Love;
Thy wings make light in the air as the wings of a dove.
Thy feet are as winds that divide the stream of the sea;
Earth is thy covering to hide thee, the garment of thee.
Thou art swift and subtle and blind as a flame of fire;
Before thee the laughter, behind thee the tears of desire;
And twain go forth beside thee, a man with a maid;
Her eyes are the eyes of a bride whom delight makes afraid;
As the breath in the buds that stir is her bridal breath;

But Fate is the name of her; and his name
is Death.

For an evil blossom was born
Of sea-foam and the frothing of blood,
Blood-red and bitter of fruit,
And the seed of it laughter and tears,
And the leaves of it madness and scorn;
A bitter flower from the bud,
Sprung of the sea without root,
Sprung without graft from the years.

The weft of the world was untorn
That is woven of the day on the night,
The hair of the hours was not white
Nor the raiment of time overworn,
When a wonder, a world's delight,
A perilous goddess was born;
And the waves of the sea as she came
Clove, and the foam at her feet,
Fawning, rejoiced to bring forth
A fleshly blossom, a flame
Filling the heavens with heat
To the cold white ends of the north.

And in air the clamorous birds,
And men upon earth that hear
Sweet articulate words
Sweetly divided apart,
And in shallow and channel and mere
The rapid and footless herds,
Rejoiced, being foolish of heart.

For all they said upon earth,
She is fair, she is white like a dove,
And the life of the world in her breath
Breathes, and is born at her birth;
For they knew thee for mother of love,
And knew thee not mother of death.

What hadst thou to do being born,
Mother, when winds were at ease,
As a flower of the springtime of corn,
A flower of the foam of the seas?
For bitter thou wast from thy birth,
Aphrodite, a mother of strife;
For before thee some rest was on earth,
A little respite from tears,
A little pleasure of life;
For life was not then as thou art,
But as one that waxeth in years
Sweet-spoken, a fruitful wife;
Earth had no thorn, and desire
No sting, neither death any dart;
What hadst thou to do amongst these,
Thou, clothed with a burning fire,
Thou, girt with sorrow of heart,
Thou, sprung of the seed of the seas

As an ear from a seed of corn,
As a brand plucked forth of a pyre,
As a ray shed forth of the morn,
For division of soul and disease,
For a dart and a sting and a thorn?
What ailed thee then to be born?

Was there not evil enough,
Mother, and anguish on earth
Born with a man at his birth,
Wastes underfoot, and above
Storm out of heaven, and dearth
Shaken down from the shining thereof,
Wrecks from afar overseas
And peril of shallow and firth,
And tears that spring and increase
In the barren places of mirth,
That thou, having wings as a dove,
Being girt with desire for a girth,
That thou must come after these,
That thou must lay on him love?

Thou shouldst not so have been born:
But death should have risen with thee,
Mother, and visible fear,
Grief, and the wringing of hands,
And noise of many that mourn;
The smitten bosom, the knee
Bowed, and in each man's ear
A cry as of perishing lands,
A moan as of people in prison,
A tumult of infinite griefs;
And thunder of storm on the sands,
And wailing of wives on the shore;
And under thee newly arisen
Loud shoals, and shipwrecking reefs,
Fierce air and violent light;
Sail rent and sundering oar,
Darkness, and noises of night;
Clashing of streams in the sea,
Wave against wave as a sword,
Clamor of currents, and foam;
Rains making ruin on earth,
Winds that wax ravenous and roam
As wolves in a wolfish horde;
Fruits growing faint in the tree,
And blind things dead in their birth;
Famine, and blighting of corn,
When thy time was come to be born.

All these we know of; but thee
Who shall discern or declare?
In the uttermost ends of the sea
The light of thine eyelids and hair,
The light of thy bosom as fire
Between the wheel of the sun
And the flying flames of the air?
Wilt thou turn thee not yet nor have
pity,

But abide with despair and desire
And the crying of armies undone,
Lamentation of one with another
And breaking of city by city;
The dividing of friend against friend,
The severing of brother and brother;
Wilt thou utterly bring to an end?
Have mercy, mother!

For against all men from of old
Thou hast set thine hand as a curse,
And cast out gods from their places
These things are spoken of thee.
Strong kings and goodly with gold
Thou hast found out arrows to pierce,
And made their kingdoms and races
As dust and surf of the sea.
All these, overburdened with woes
And with length of their days waxen weak,
Thou slewest; and sentest moreover
Upon Tyro an evil thing,
Rent hair and a fetter and blows
Making bloody the flower of the cheek,
Though she lay by a god as a lover,
Though fair, and the seed of a king.
For of old, being full of thy fire,
She endured not longer to wear
On her bosom a saffron vest,
On her shoulder an ashwood quiver;
Being mixed and made one through desire,
With Enipeus, and all her hair
Made moist with his mouth, and her breast
Filled full of the foam of the river.

(1865)

THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE

Here, where the world is quiet;
Here, where all trouble seems
Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
In doubtful dreams of dreams;
I watch the green field growing
For reaping folk and sowing,
For harvest-time and mowing,
A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
And men that laugh and weep;
Of what may come hereafter
For men that sow to reap:
I am weary of days and hours,
Blown buds of barren flowers,
Desires and dreams and powers
And everything but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbor,
And far from eye or ear
Wan waves and wet winds labor,
Weak ships and spirits steer;
They drive adrift, and whither
They wot not who make thither;
But no such winds blow hither,
And no such things grow here.

No growth of moor or coppice,
No heather-flower or vine,
But bloomless buds of poppies,
Green grapes of Proserpine,
Pale beds of blowing rushes,
Where no leaf blooms or blushes
Save this whereout she crushes
For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,
In fruitless fields of corn,
They bow themselves and slumber
All night till light is born;
And like a soul belated,
In hell and heaven unmated,
By cloud and mist abated
Comes out of darkness morn.

Though one were strong as seven,
He too with death shall dwell,
Nor wake with wings in heaven,
Nor weep for pains in hell;
Though one were fair as roses,
His beauty clouds and closes;
And well though love reposes,
In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch and portal,
Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
Who gathers all things mortal
With cold immortal hands;
Her languid lips are sweeter
Than love's who fears to greet her,
To men that mix and meet her
From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
She waits for all men born;
Forgets the earth her mother,
The life of fruits and corn;
And spring and seed and swallow
Take wing for her and follow
Where summer song rings hollow
And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
The old loves with wearier wings;
And all dead years draw thither,

And all disastrous things;
Dead dreams of days forsaken,
Blind buds that snows have shaken,
Wild leaves that winds have taken,
Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow;
And joy was never sure;
To-day will die to-morrow;
Time stoops to no man's lure;
And love, grown faint and fretful,
With lips but half regretful
Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be
That no life lives for ever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
Nor any change of light:
Nor sound of waters shaken,
Nor any sound or sight:
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
Nor days nor things diurnal;
Only the sleep eternal
In an eternal night.

(1866)

HERTHA

I am that which began;
Out of me the years roll;
Out of me God and man;
I am equal and whole;
God changes, and man, and the form of them bodily; I am the soul.

Before ever land was,
Before ever the sea,
Or soft hair of the grass,
Or fair limbs of the tree,
Or the flesh-colored fruit of my branches, I was, and thy soul was in me.

First life on my sources
First drifted and swam;
Out of me are the forces
That save it or damn;
Out of me, man and woman, and wild-beast and bird; before God was, I am.

Beside or above me
Naught is there to go;
Love or unlove me,
Unknow me or know,
I am that which unloves me and loves; I am stricken, and I am the blow.

I the mark that is missed
And the arrows that miss,
I the mouth that is kissed
And the breath in the kiss.
The search, and the sought, and the seeker, the soul and the body that is.

I am that thing which blesses
My spirit elate;
That which caresses
With hands uncreate
My limbs unbegotten that measure the length of the measure of fate.

But what thing dost thou now,
Looking Godward, to cry
'I am I, thou art thou,
I am low, thou art high?'
I am thou, whom thou seekest to find him; find thou but thyself, thou art I.

I the grain and the furrow,
The plough-cloven clod
And the plough-share drawn thorough,
The germ and the sod,
The deed and the doer, the seed and the sower, the dust which is God.

Hast thou known how I fashioned thee,
Child, underground?
Fire that impassioned thee,
Iron that bound,
Dim changes of water, what thing of all these hast thou known of or found?

Canst thou say in thine heart
Thou hast seen with thine eyes
With what cunning of art
Thou wast wrought in what wise,
By what force of what stuff thou wast shapen, and shown on my breast to the skies?

Who hath given, who hath sold it thee,
Knowledge of me?
Hath the wilderness told it thee?
Hast thou learnt of the sea?
Hast thou communed in spirit with night? have the winds taken counsel with thee?

Have I set such a star
To show light on thy brow
That thou sawest from afar
What I show to thee now?
Have ye spoken as brethren together, the sun and the mountains and thou?

What is here, dost thou know it?
What was, hast thou known?
Prophet nor poet
Nor tripod nor throne
Nor spirit nor flesh can make answer, but only thy mother alone.

Mother, not maker,
Born, and not made;
Though her children forsake her,
Allured or afraid,
Praying prayers to the God of their fashion, she stirs not for all that have prayed.

A creed is a rod,
And a crown is of night;
But this thing is God,
To be man with thy might,
To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit, and live out thy life as the light.

I am in thee to save thee,
As my soul in thee saith;
Give thou as I gave thee,
Thy life-blood and breath,
Green leaves of thy labor, white flowers of thy thought, and red fruit of thy death.

Be the ways of thy giving
As mine were to thee;
The free life of thy living,
Be the gift of it free;
Not as servant to lord, nor as master to slave, shalt thou give thee to me.

O children of banishment,
Souls overcast,
Were the lights ye see vanish meant
Always to last,
Ye would know not the sun overshining the shadows and stars overpast.

I that saw where ye trod
The dim paths of the night
Set the shadow called God
In your skies to give light;
But the morning of manhood is risen, and the shadowless soul is in sight.

The tree many-rooted
That swells to the sky
With frondage red-fruited
The life-tree am I;
In the buds of your lives is the sap of my leaves: ye shall live and not die.

But the gods of your fashion
That take and that give,
In their pity and passion
That scourge and forgive,
They are worms that are bred in the bark that falls off, they shall die and not live.

My own blood is what stanches
The wounds in my bark;
Stars caught in my branches
Make day of the dark,
And are worshipped as suns till the sunrise shall tread out their fires as a spark.

Where dead ages hide under
The live roots of the tree,
In my darkness the thunder
Makes utterance of me;
In the clash of my boughs with each other ye hear the waves sound of the sea.

That noise is of Time,
As his feathers are spread
And his feet set to climb
Through the boughs overhead,
And my foliage rings round him and rustles, and branches are bent with his tread.

The storm-winds of ages
Blow through me and cease,
The war-wind that rages,
The spring-wind of peace,
Ere the breath of them roughen my tresses, ere one of my blossoms increase.

All sounds of all changes,
All shadows and lights
On the world's mountain-ranges,
And stream-riven heights,
Whose tongue is the wind's tongue and language of storm-clouds on earth-shaking nights;

All forms of all faces,
All works of all hands
In unsearchable places

Of time-stricken lands,
All death and all life, and all reigns and all ruins, drop through me as sands.

Though sore be my burden
And more than ye know,
And my growth have no guerdon
But only to grow,
Yet I fail not of growing for lightnings above me or death-worms below.

These too have their part in me,
As I too in these;
Such fire is at heart in me,
Such sap is this tree's,
Which hath in it all sounds and all secrets of infinite lands and of seas.

In the spring-colored hours
When my mind was as May's,
There brake forth of me flowers
By centuries of days,
Strong blossoms with perfume of manhood, shot out from my spirit as rays.

And the sound of them springing
And smell of their shoots
Were as warmth and sweet singing,
And strength to my roots;
And the lives of my children made perfect with freedom of soul were my fruits.

I bid you but be;
I have need not of prayer;
I have need of you free
As your mouths of mine air;
That my heart may be greater within me, beholding the fruits of me fair.

More fair than strange fruit is
Of faiths ye espouse;
In me only the root is
That blooms in your boughs;
Behold now your god that ye made you, to feed him with faith of your vows.

In the darkening and whitening
Abysses, adored,
With dayspring and lightning
For lamp and for sword,
God thunders in heaven, and his angels are red with the wrath of the Lord.

O my sons, O too dutiful
Towards gods not of me,
Was not I enough beautiful?
Was it hard to be free?
For behold, I am with you, am in you and of you; look forth now and see.

Lo, winged with world's wonders,
With miracles shod,
With the fires of his thunders
For raiment and rod,
God trembles in heaven, and his angels are white with the terror of God.

For his twilight is come on him,
His anguish is here;
And his spirits gaze dumb on him,
Grown gray from his fear;
And his hour taketh hold on him stricken, the last of his infinite year.

Thought made him and breaks him,
Truth slays and forgives;
But to you, as time takes him,
This new thing it gives,
Even love, the beloved Republic, that feeds upon freedom and lives.

For truth only is living,
Truth only is whole,
And the love of his giving
Man's polestar and pole;
Man, pulse of my center, and fruit of my body, and seed of my soul.

One birth of my bosom;
One beam of mine eye;
One topmost blossom
That scales the sky;
Man, equal and one with me, man that is made of me, man that is I.

(1871)

A FORSAKEN GARDEN

In a coign of the cliff between lowland and highland,
At the sea-down's edge between windward and lee,
Walled round with rocks as an inland island,
The ghost of a garden fronts the sea.
A girdle of brushwood and thorn encloses
The steep square slope of the blossomless bed
Where the weeds that grew green from the graves of its roses
Now lie dead.

The fields fall southward, abrupt and broken,

To the low last edge of the long lone land.
If a step should sound or a word be spoken,
Would a ghost not rise at the strange guest's hand?
So long have the gray bare walks lain guestless,
Through branches and briers if a man make way,
He shall find no life but the sea-wind's restless
Night and day.

The dense hard passage is blind and stifled
That crawls by a track none turn to climb
To the strait waste place that the years have rifled
Of all but the thorns that are touched not of time.
The thorns he spares when the rose is taken;
The rocks are left when he wastes the plain;
The wind that wanders, the weeds wind-shaken,
These remain.

Not a flower to be pressed of the foot that falls not;
As the heart of a dead man the seed-plots are dry;
From the thicket of thorns whence the nightingale calls not,
Could she call, there were never a rose to reply.
Over the meadows that blossom and wither,
Rings but the note of a sea-bird's song.
Only the sun and the rain come hither
All year long.

The sun burns sear, and the rain dishevels
One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless breath.
Only the wind here hovers and revels,
In a round where life seems barren as death.
Here there was laughing of old, there was weeping,
Haply, of lovers none ever will know,
Whose eyes went seaward a hundred sleeping
Years ago.

Heart handfast in heart as they stood, 'Look thither,'
Did he whisper? 'Look forth from the flowers to the sea:
For the foam-flowers endure when the rose-blossoms wither,
And men that love lightly may die — but we?'
And the same wind sang, and the same waves whitened,
And or ever the garden's last petals were shed,
In the lips that had whispered, the eyes that had lightened,
Love was dead.

Or they loved their life through, and then went whither?
And were one to the end — but what end who knows?
Love deep as the sea as a rose must wither,
As the rose-red seaweed that mocks the rose.
Shall the dead take thought for the dead to love them?
What love was ever as deep as a grave?
They are loveless now as the grass above them
Or the wave.

All are at one now, roses and lovers,
Not known of the cliffs and the fields and the sea.
Not a breath of the time that has been hovers
In the air now soft with a summer to be.
Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons hereafter
Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or weep,
When as they that are free now of weeping and laughter
We shall sleep.

Here death may deal not again for ever;
Here change may come not till all change end.
From the graves they have made they shall rise up never.
Who have left naught living to ravage and rend.
Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild ground growing,
While the sun and the rain live, these shall be;
Till a last wind's breath, upon all these blowing,
Roll the sea.

Till the slow sea rise, and the sheer cliff crumble,

Till terrace and meadow the deep gulfs drink,
Till the strength of the waves of the high tides humble
The fields that lessen, the rocks that shrink,
Here now in his triumph where all things falter,
Stretched out on the spoils that his own hand spread,
As a god self-slain on his own strange altar,
Death lies dead.

(1876)

THALASSIUS

Upon the flowery forefront of the year,
One wandering by the gray-green April sea
Found on a reach of shingle and shallower sand,
Inlaid with starrier glimmering jewelry
Left for the sun's love and the light wind's cheer
Along the foam-flowered strand,
Breeze-brightened, something nearer sea than land,
Though the last shoreward blossom-fringe was near,
A babe asleep, with flower-soft face that gleamed
To sun and seaward as it laughed and dreamed,
Too sure of either love for either's fear,
Albeit so birdlike slight and light, it seemed,
Nor man, nor mortal child of man, but fair
As even its twin-born tenderer spray-flowers were,
That the wind scatters like an Oread's hair.

For when July strewed fire on earth and sea
The last time ere that year,
Out of the flame of morn Cymothoë,
Beheld one brighter than the sun-bright sphere
Move toward her from its fieriest heart, whence trod
The live sun's very god,
Across the foam-bright water-ways that are
As heavenlier heavens, with star for answering star;
And on her eyes and hair and maiden mouth
Felt a kiss falling fierier than the South,
And heard above afar
A noise of songs and wind-enamored wings,
And lutes and lyres of milder and mightier strings,
And round the resonant radiance of his car
Where depth is one with height,
Light heard as music, music seen as light,
And with that second moondawn of the spring's
That fosters the first rose,
A sun-child whiter than the sunlit snows
Was born out of the world of sunless things
That round the round earth flows and ebbs and flows.

But he that found the sea-flower by the sea,
And took to foster like a graft of earth,
Was born of man's most highest and heavenliest birth,
Free-born as winds and stars and waves are free;
A warrior gray with glories more than years,
Though more of years than change the quick to dead
Had rained their light and darkness on his head;
A singer that in time's and memory's ears
Should leave such words to sing as all his peers
Might praise with hallowing heat of rapturous tears,
Till all the days of human flight were fled.
And at his knees his fosterling was fed,
Not with man's wine and bread,
Nor mortal mother-milk of hopes and fears,
But food of deep memorial days long sped;
For bread with wisdom, and with song for wine,
Clear as the full calm's emerald hyaline.
And from his grave glad lips the boy would gather
Fine honey of song-notes, goldener than gold,
More sweet than bees make of the breathing heather,
That he, as glad and bold,
Might drink as they, and keep his spirit from cold.
And the boy loved his laurel-laden hair
As his own father's risen on the eastern air,
And that less white brow-binding bayleaf bloom,
More than all flowers his father's eyes relume,
And those high songs he heard,
More than all notes of any landward bird,
More than all sounds less free
Than the wind's quiring to the choral sea.

High things the high song taught him: how the breath,
Too frail for life, may be more strong than death;
And this poor flash of sense in life, that gleams
As a ghost's glory in dreams,
More stable than the world's own heart's root seems,
By that strong faith of lordliest love, which gives
To death's own sightless-seeming eyes a light
Clearer, to death's bare bones a verier might,
Than shines or strikes from any man that lives;
How he that loves life overmuch shall die
The dog's death, utterly;
And he that much less loves it than he hates
All wrong-doing that is done,
Anywhere always underneath the sun,
Shall live a mightier life than time's or fate's.
One fairer thing he showed him, and in might
More strong than day and night,
Whose strengths build up time's towering period;
Yea, one thing stronger and more high than God,
Which, if man had not, then should God not be:
And that was Liberty.
And gladly should man die to gain, he said,
Freedom; and gladlier, having lost, lie dead.
For man's earth was not, nor the sweet sea-waves
His, nor his own land, nor its very graves,
Except they bred not, bore not, hid not slaves;
But all of all that is,
Were one man free in body and soul, were his.

And the song softened, even as heaven by night
Softens, from sunnier down to starrier light,
And with its moon-bright breath
Blessed life for death's sake, and for life's sake death;
Till as the moon's own beam and breath confuse,
In one clear hueless haze of glimmering hues,
The sea's line, and the land's line, and the sky's,
And light for love of darkness almost dies,
As darkness only lives for light's dear love,
Whose hands the web of night is woven of:
So in that heaven of wondrous words were life
And death brought out of strife;
Yea, by that strong spell of serene increase,
Brought out of strife to peace.

And the song lightened, as the wind at morn
Flashes, and even with lightning of the wind
Night's thick-spun web is thinned,
And all its weft unwoven and overworn
Shrinks, as might love from scorn,
And as when wind and light, on water and land,
Leap as twin gods from heavenward, hand in hand,
And with the sound and splendor of their leap
Strike darkness dead, and daunt the spirit of sleep,
And burn it up with fire;
So with the light that lightened from the lyre,
Was all the bright heat in the child's heart stirred,
And blown with blasts of music into flame,
Till even his sense became
Fire, as the sense that fires the singing bird,
Whose song calls night by name.
And in the soul within the sense began
The manlike passion of a godlike man,
And in the sense within the soul again
Thoughts that make men of gods, and gods of men.

For love the high song taught him,—love that turns
God's heart toward man as man's to Godward; love
That life and death and life are fashioned of,
From the first breath that burns
Half-kindled on the flower-like yeanling's lip
So light and faint that life seems like to slip,
To that yet weaklier drawn
When sunset dies of night's devouring dawn;
But the man dying not wholly as all men dies

If aught be left of his in live men's eyes
Out of the dawnless dark of death to rise;
If aught of deed or word
Be seen for all time, or of all time heard.
Love, that though body and soul were overthrown,
Should live for love's sake of itself alone,
Though spirit and flesh were one thing doomed and dead.
Not wholly annihilated.
Seeing even the hoariest ash-flake that the pyre
Drops, and forgets the thing was once afire,
And gave its heart to feed the pile's full flame
Till its own heart its own heat overcame,
Outlives its own life, though by scarce a span,
As such men dying outlive themselves in man,
Outlive themselves for ever; if the heat
Outburn the heart that kindled it, the sweet
Outlast the flower whose soul it was, and flit,
Forth of a body of it
Into some new shape of a strange perfume
More potent than its light live spirit of bloom,—
How shall not something of that soul relive,
That only soul that had such gifts to give
As lighten something even of all men's doom,
Even from the laboring womb,
Even to the seal set on the unopening tomb?
And these the loving light of song and love
Shall wrap and lap round, and impend above,
Imperishable; and all springs born illume
Their sleep with brighter thoughts than wake the dove
To music, when the hillside winds resume
The marriage-song of heather-flower and broom
And all the joy thereof.

And hate the song, too, taught him,—hate of all
That brings or holds in thrall
Of spirit or flesh, free born ere God began,
The holy body and sacred soul of man.
And wheresoever a curse was, or a chain,
A throne for torment or a crown for bane
Rose, molded out of poor men's molten pain,
There, said he, should man's heaviest hate be set
Inexorably, to faint not or forget
Till the last warmth bled forth of the last vein
In flesh that none should call a king's again,
Seeing wolves and dogs and birds that plague-strike air
Leave the last bone of all the carrion bare.

And hope the high song taught him,—hope whose eyes
Can sound the seas unsoundable, the skies
Inaccessible of eyesight; that can see
What earth beholds not, hear what wind and sea
Hear not, and speak what all these crying in one
Can speak not to the sun.
For in her sovereign eyelight all things are
Clear as the closest seen and kindlier star
That marries morn and even and winter and spring
With one love's golden ring.
For she can see the days of man, the birth
Of good, and death of evil things on earth
Inevitable and infinite, and sure
As present pain is, or herself is pure.
Yea, she can hear and see, beyond all things
That lighten from before Time's thunderous wings
Through the awful circle of wheel-winged periods,
The tempest of the twilight of all gods;
And, higher than all the circling course they ran,
The sundawn of the spirit that was man.

And fear the song, too, taught him,—fear to be
Worthless the dear love of the wind and sea
That bred him fearless, like a sea-mew reared
In rocks of man's foot feared,
Where naught of wingless life may sing or shine.
Fear to wax worthless of that heaven he had,
When all the life in all his limbs was glad,
And all the drops in all his veins were wine,
And all the pulses music; when his heart,
Singing, bade heaven and wind and sea bear part
In one live song's reiterance, and they bore;
Fear to go crownless of the flower he wore
When the winds loved him, and the waters knew
The blithest life that clove their blithe life through

With living limbs exultant, or held strife
More amorous than all dalliance aye anew
With the bright breath and strength of their large life,
With all strong wrath of all sheer winds that blew,
All glories of all storms of the air that fell
Prone, ineluctable,
With roar from heaven of revel, and with hue
As of a heaven turned hell.
For when the red blast of their breath had made,
All heaven aflush with light more dire than shade,
He felt it in his blood and eyes and hair
Burn as if all the fires of the earth and air
Had laid strong hold upon his flesh, and stung
The soul behind it as with serpent's tongue,
Forked like the loveliest lightnings; nor could bear
But hardly, half distraught with strong delight,
The joy that like a garment wrapped him round,
And lapped him over and under
With raiment of great light,
And rapture of great sound
At every loud leap earthward of the thunder
From heaven's most furthest bound:
So seemed all heaven in hearing and in sight,
Alive and mad with glory and angry joy,
That something of its marvelous mirth and might
Moved even to madness, fledged as even for flight,
The blood and spirit of one but mortal boy.

* * *

(1880)

ÉTUDE REALISTE

I

A baby's feet, like sea-shells pink,
Might tempt, should heaven see meet,
An angel's lips to kiss, we think,
A baby's feet.

Like rose-hued sea-flowers toward the heat
They stretch and spread and wink
Their ten soft buds that part and meet.

No flower-bells that expand and shrink
Gleam half so heavenly sweet
As shine on life's untrodden brink
A baby's feet.

II

A baby's hands, like rosebuds furled
Whence yet no leaf expands,
Ope if you touch, though close upcurled,
A baby's hands.

Then, fast as warriors grip their brands
When battle's bolt is hurled,
They close, clenched hard like tightening bands.

No rosebuds yet by dawn impearled
Match, even in loveliest lands,
The sweetest flowers in all the world —
A baby's hands.

III

A baby's eyes, ere speech begin,
Ere lips learn words or sighs,
Bless all things bright enough to win
A baby's eyes.

Love, while the sweet thing laughs and lies,
And sleep flows out and in,
Sees perfect in them Paradise.

Their glance might cast out pain and sin,
Their speech make dumb the wise,
By mute glad godhead felt within
A baby's eyes.

(1883)

THE ROUNDEL

A roundel is wrought as a ring or a star-bright sphere,
With craft of delight and with cunning of sound unsought,
That the heart of the hearer may smile if to pleasure his ear
A roundel is wrought.

Its jewel of music is carven of all or of aught —
Love, laughter, or mourning — remembrance of rapture or fear —
That fancy may fashion to hang in the ear of thought.

As a bird's quick song runs round, and the hearts in us hear
Pause answer to pause, and again the same strain caught,

So moves the device whence, round as a pearl or tear,
A roundel is wrought.

(1883)

ON A COUNTRY ROAD

Along these low pleached lanes, on such a day,
So soft a day as this, through shade and sun,
With glad grave eyes that scanned the glad wild way,
And heart still hovering o'er a song begun,
And smile that warmed the world with benison,
Our father, lord long since of lordly rime,
Long since hath haply ridden, when the lime
Bloomed broad above him, flowering where he came.
Because thy passage once made warm this clime,
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

Each year that England clothes herself with May,
She takes thy likeness on her. Time hath spun
Fresh raiment all in vain and strange array
For earth and man's new spirit, fain to shun
Things past for dreams of better to be won,
Through many a century since thy funeral chime
Rang, and men deemed it death's most direful crime
To have spared not thee for very love or shame;
And yet, while mists round last year's memories climb,
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

Each turn of the old wild road whereon we stray,
Meseems, might bring us face to face with one
Whom seeing we could not but give thanks, and pray
For England's love our father and her son
To speak with us as once in days long done
With all men, sage and churl and monk and mime,
Who knew not as we know the soul sublime
That sang for song's love more than lust of fame.
Yet, though this be not, yet, in happy time,
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

Friend, even as bees about the flowering thyme,
Years crowd on years, till hoar decay begrime
Names once beloved; but, seeing the sun the same,
As birds of autumn fain to praise the prime,
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

(1884)

THE ARMADA

1588: 1888

I

1

England, mother born of seamen, daughter fostered of the sea,
Mother more beloved than all who bear not all their children free,
Reared and nursed and crowned and cherished by the sea-wind and the sun,
Sweetest land and strongest, face most fair and mightiest heart in one,
Stands not higher than when the centuries known of earth were less by three,
When the strength that struck the whole world pale fell back from hers undone.

2

At her feet were the heads of her foes bowed down, and the strengths of the storm of them stayed,
And the hearts that were touched not with mercy with terror were touched and amazed and affrayed:
Yea, hearts that had never been molten with pity were molten with fear as with flame,
And the priests of the Godhead whose temple is hell, and his heart is of iron and fire,
And the swordsmen that served and the seamen that sped them, whom peril could tame not or tire.

Were as foam on the winds of the waters of England which tempest can tire not or tame.

III

They were girded about with thunder, and lightning came forth of the rage of their strength,
And the measure that measures the wings of the storm was the breadth of their force and the length:
And the name of their might was Invincible, covered and clothed with the terror of God;
With his wrath were they winged, with his love were they fired, with the speed of his winds were they shod;
With his soul were they filled, in his trust were they comforted; grace was upon them as night,
And faith as the blackness of darkness: the fume of their balefires was fair in his sight,
The reek of them sweet as a savor of myrrh in his nostrils: the world that he made,
Theirs was it by gift of his servants: the wind, if they spake in his name, was afraid,
And the sun was a shadow before it, the stars were astonished with fear of it: fire
Went up to them, fed with men living, and lit of men's hands for a shrine or a pyre;
And the east and the west wind scattered their ashes abroad, that his name should be blest
Of the tribes of the chosen whose blessings are curses from uttermost east unto west.

II

I

Hell for Spain, and heaven for England,—God to God, and man to man,—
Met confronted, light with darkness, life with death: since time began,
Never earth nor sea beheld so great a stake before them set,
Save when Athens hurled back Asia from the lists wherein they met;
Never since the sands of ages through the glass of history ran
Saw the sun in heaven a lordlier day than this that lights us yet.

II

For the light that abides upon England, the glory that rests on her godlike name,
The pride that is love and the love that is faith, a perfume dissolved in flame,
Took fire from the dawn of the fierce July when fleets were scattered as foam
And squadrons as flakes of spray; when galleon and galliass that shadowed the sea
Were swept from her waves like shadows that pass with the clouds they fell from, and she
Laughed loud to the wind as it gave to her keeping the glories of Spain and Rome.

III

Three hundred summers have fallen as leaves by the storms in their season thinned,
Since northward the war-ships of Spain came sheer up the way of the south-west wind:
Where the citadel cliffs of England are flanked with bastions of serpentine,
Far off to the windward loomed their hulls, an hundred and twenty-nine,
All filled full of the war, full-fraught with battle and charged with bale;
Then store-ships weighted with cannon; and all were an hundred and fifty sail.
The measureless menace of darkness anhungered with hope to prevail upon light,
The shadow of death made substance, the present and visible spirit of night,
Came, shaped as a waxing or waning moon that rose with the fall of day,
To the channel where couches the Lion in guard of the gate of the lustrous bay.
Fair England, sweet as the sea that shields her, and pure as the sea from stain,
Smiled, hearing hardly for scorn that stirred her the menace of saintly Spain.

III

I

'They that ride over ocean wide with hempen bridle and horse of tree,'
How shall they in the darkening day of wrath and anguish and fear go free?
How shall these that have curbed the seas not feel his bridle who made the sea?

God shall bow them and break them now:
for what is man in the Lord God's
sight?
Fear shall shake them, and shame shall
break, and all the noon of their pride
be night:
These that sinned shall the ravening wind
of doom bring under, and judgment
smite.

England broke from her neck the yoke, and
rent the fetter, and mocked the rod:
Shrines of old that she decked with gold
she turned to dust, to the dust she trod:
What is she, that the wind and sea should
fight beside her, and war with God?

Lo, the cloud of his ships that crowd her
channel's inlet with storm sublime,
Darker far than the tempests are that sweep
the skies of her northmost clime;
Huge and dense as the walls that fence the
secret darkness of unknown time.

Mast on mast as a tower goes past, and sail
by sail as a cloud's wing spread;
Fleet by fleet, as the throngs whose feet
keep time with death in his dance of
dread;
Galleons dark as the helmsman's bark of
old that ferried to hell the dead.

Squadrons proud as their lords, and loud
with tramp of soldiers and chant of
priests;
Slaves there told by the thousandfold, made
fast in bondage as herded beasts;
Lords and slaves that the sweet free waves
shall feed on, satiate with funeral feasts.

Nay, not so shall it be, they know; their
priests have said it; can priesthood lie?
God shall keep them, their God shall sleep
not: peril and evil shall pass them by:
Nay, for these are his children; seas and
winds shall bid not his children die.

II

So they boast them, the monstrous host
whose menace mocks at the dawn: and
here
They that wait at the wild sea's gate, and
watch the darkness of doom draw near,
How shall they in their evil day sustain the
strength of their hearts for fear?

Full July in the fervent sky sets forth her
twentieth of changing morns:
Winds fall mild that of late waxed wild:
no presage whispers or wails or warns:
Far to west on the bland sea's breast a sail-
ing crescent uprears her horns.

Seven wide miles the serene sea smiles be-
tween them stretching from rim to rim:
Soft they shine, but a darker sign should
bid not hope or belief wax dim:
God's are these men, and not the sea's: their
trust is set not on her but him.

God's? but who is the God whereto the
prayers and incense of these men rise?
What is he, that the wind and sea should
fear him, quelled by his sunbright eyes?
What, that men should return again, and
hail him Lord of the servile skies?

Hell's own flame at his heavenly name leaps
higher and laughs, and its gulfs re-
joice:
Plague and death from his baneful breath
take life and lighten, and praise his
choice:
Chosen are they to devour for prey the
tribes that hear not and fear his voice.

Ay, but we that the wind and sea gird
round with shelter of storms and
waves
Know not him that ye worship, grim as
dreams that quicken from dead men's
graves:
God is one with the sea, the sun, the land
that nursed us, the love that saves.

Love whose heart is in ours, and part of all
things noble and all things fair;
Sweet and free as the circling sea, sublime
and kind as the fostering air;
Pure of shame as is England's name, whose
crowns to come are as crowns that
were.

IV

I

But the Lord of darkness, the God whose
love is a flaming fire,
The master whose mercy fulfils wide hell
till its torturers tire,
He shall surely have heed of his servants
who serve him for love, not hire.

They shall fetter the wing of the wind
whose pinions are plumed with foam:

For now shall thy horn be exalted, and now shall thy bolt strike home;
Yea, now shall thy kingdom come, Lord God of the priests of Rome.

They shall cast thy curb on the waters, and bridle the waves of the sea:
They shall say to her, Peace, be still: and stillness and peace shall be:
And the winds and the storms shall hear them, and tremble, and worship thee.

Thy breath shall darken the morning, and wither the mounting sun;
And the daysprings, frozen and fettered, shall know thee, and cease to run;
The heart of the world shall feel thee, and die, and thy will be done.

The spirit of man that would sound thee, and search out causes of things,
Shall shrink and subside and praise thee: and wisdom, with plume-plucked wings,
Shall cower at thy feet and confess thee, that none may fathom thy springs.

The fountains of song that await but the wind of an April to be
To burst the bonds of the winter, and speak with the sound of a sea,
The blast of thy mouth shall quench them: and song shall be only of thee.

The days that are dead shall quicken, the seasons that were shall return;
And the streets and the pastures of England, the woods that burgeon and yearn,
Shall be whitened with ashes of women and children and men that burn.

For the mother shall burn with the babe sprung forth of her womb in fire,
And the bride with bridegroom, and brother with sister, and son with sire;
And the noise of the flames shall be sweet in thine ears as the sound of a lyre.

Yea, so shall thy kingdom be stablished, and so shall the signs of it be:
And the world shall know, and the wind shall speak, and the sun shall see,
That these are the works of thy servants, whose works bear witness to thee.

II

But the dusk of the day falls fruitless, whose light should have lit them on:
Sails flash through the gloom to shoreward, eclipsed as the sun that shone:
And the west wind wakes with dawn, and the hope that was here is gone.

Around they wheel and around, two knots to the Spaniard's one,
The wind-swift warriors of England, who shoot as with shafts of the sun,
With fourfold shots for the Spaniard's, that spare not till day be done.

And the wind with the sundown sharpens, and hurtles the ships to the lee,
And Spaniard on Spaniard smites, and shatters, and yields; and we,
Ere battle begin, stand lords of the battle, acclaimed of the sea.

And the day sweeps round to the nightward; and heavy and hard the waves
Roll in on the herd of the hurtling galleons; and masters and slaves
Reel blind in the grasp of the dark strong wind that shall dig their graves.

For the sepulchers hollowed and shaped of the wind in the swerve of the seas,
The graves that gape for their pasture, and laugh, thrilled through by the breeze,
The sweet soft merciless waters, await and are fain of these.

As the hiss of a Python heaving in menace of doom to be
They hear through the clear night round them, whose hours are as clouds that flee,
The whisper of tempest sleeping, the heave and the hiss of the sea.

But faith is theirs, and with faith are they girded and helmed and shod:
Invincible are they, almighty, elect for a sword and a rod;
Invincible even as their God is omnipotent, infinite, God.

In him is their strength, who have sworn that his glory shall wax not dim:
In his name are their war-ships hallowed as mightiest of all that swim:
The men that shall cope with these, and conquer, shall cast out him.

In him is the trust of their hearts; the desire of their eyes is he;
The light of their ways, made lightning for men that would fain be free:
Earth's hosts are with them, and with them is heaven: but with us is the sea.

V

I

And a day and a night pass over;
And the heart of their chief swells high;
For England, the warrior, the rover,
Whose banners on all winds fly,
Soul-stricken, he saith, by the shadow of death, holds off him, and draws not nigh.

And the wind and the dawn together
Make in from the gleaming east:
And fain of the wild glad weather
As famine is fain of feast,
And fain of the fight, forth sweeps in its might the host of the Lord's high priest.

And lightly before the breeze
The ships of his foes take wing:
Are they scattered, the lords of the seas?
Are they broken, the foes of the king?
And ever now higher as a mounting fire the hopes of the Spaniard spring.

And a windless night comes down:
And a breezeless morning, bright
With promise of praise to crown
The close of the crowning fight,
Leaps up as the foe's heart leaps, and glows with lustrous rapture of light.

And stinted of gear for battle
The ships of the sea's folk lie,
Unwarlike, herded as cattle,
Six miles from the foeman's eye
That fastens as flame on the sight of them tame and offenceless, and ranged as to die.

Surely the souls in them quail,
They are stricken and withered at heart,
When in on them, sail by sail,
Fierce marvels of monstrous art,
Tower darkening on tower till the sea-winds cower crowds down as to hurl them apart.

And the windless weather is kindly,
And comforts the host in these;
And their hearts are uplift in them blindly,
And blindly they boast at ease
That the next day's fight shall exalt them, and smite with destruction the lords of the seas.

II

And lightly the proud hearts prattle,
And lightly the dawn draws nigh,
The dawn of the doom of the battle
When these shall falter and fly;
No day more great in the roll of fate filled ever with fire the sky.

To fightward they go as to feastward,
And the tempest of ships that drive
Sets eastward ever and eastward,
Till closer they strain and strive;
And the shots that rain on the hulls of Spain are as thunders afire and alive.

And about them the blithe sea smiles
And flashes to windward and lee
Round capes and headlands and isles
That heed not if war there be;
Round Sark, round Wight, green jewels of light in the ring of the golden sea.

But the men that within them abide
Are stout of spirit and stark
As rocks that repel the tide,
As day that repels the dark;
And the light bequeathed from their swords unsheathed shines lineal on Wight and on Sark.

And eastward the storm sets ever,
The storm of the sails that strain
And follow and close and sever
And lose and return and gain;
And English thunder divides in sunder the holds of the ships of Spain.

Southward to Calais, appalled
And astonished, the vast fleet veers;
And the skies are shrouded and palled,
But the moonless midnight hears
And sees how swift on them drive and drift strange flames that the darkness fears.

They fly through the night from shoreward,
Heart-stricken till morning break,
And ever to scourge them forward
Drives down on them England's Drake,
And hurls them in as they hurtle and spin and stagger, with storm to wake.

VI

I

And now is their time come on them.
For eastward they drift and reel,

With the shallows of Flanders ahead, with destruction and havoc at heel,
With God for their comfort only, the God whom they serve; and here
Their Lord, of his great loving-kindness, may revel and make good cheer;
Though ever his lips wax thirstier with drinking, and hotter the lusts in him swell;
For he feeds the thirst that consumes him with blood, and his winepress fumes with the reek of hell.

II

Fierce noon beats hard on the battle; the galleons that loom to the lee
Bow down, heel over, uplifting their shelterless hulls from the sea:
From scuppers aspirt with blood, from guns dismounted and dumb,
The signs of the doom they looked for, the loud mute witnesses come.
They press with sunset to seaward for comfort: and shall not they find it there?
O servants of God most high, shall his winds not pass you by, and his waves not spare?

III

The wings of the south-west wind are widened; the breath of his fervent lips,
More keen than a sword's edge, fiercer than fire, falls full on the plunging ships.
The pilot is he of their northward flight, their stay and their steersman he;
A helmsman clothed with the tempest, and girdled with strength to constrain the sea.
And the host of them trembles and quails, caught fast in his hand as a bird in the toils;
For the wrath and the joy that fulfil him are mightier than man's, whom he slays and spoils.
And vainly, with heart divided in sunder, and labor of wavering will,
The lord of their host takes counsel with hope if haply their star shine still,
If haply some light be left them of chance to renew and redeem the fray;
But the will of the black south-wester is lord of the councils of war to-day.
One only spirit it quells not, a splendor undarkened of chance or time;
Be the praise of his foes with Oquendo for ever, a name as a star sublime.
But here what aid in a hero's heart, what help in his hand may be?
For ever the dark wind whitens and blackens the hollows and heights of the sea.
And galley by galley, divided and desolate, founders; and none takes heed,
Nor foe nor friend, if they perish; forlorn, cast off in their uttermost need,
They sink in the whelm of the waters, as pebbles by children from shoreward hurled,
In the North Sea's waters that end not, nor know they a bourn but the bourn of the world.
Past many a secure unavailable harbor, and many a loud stream's mouth,
Past Humber and Tees and Tyne and Tweed, they fly, scourged on from the south,
And torn by the scourge of the storm-wind that smites as a harper smites on a lyre,
And consumed of the storm as the sacrifice loved of their God is consumed with fire,
And devoured of the darkness as men that are slain in the fires of his love are devoured,
And deflowered of their lives by the storms, as by priests is the spirit of life deflowered.
For the wind, of its godlike mercy, relents not, and hounds them ahead to the north,
With English hunters at heel, till now is the herd of them past the Forth,
All huddled and hurtled seaward; and now need none wage war upon these,
Nor huntsmen follow the quarry whose fall is the pastime sought of the seas.
Day upon day upon day confounds them, with measureless mists that swell,
With drift of rains everlasting and dense as the fumes of ascending hell.
The visions of priest and of prophet beholding his enemies bruised of his rod
Beheld but the likeness of this that is fallen on the faithful, the friends of God.
Northward, and northward, and northward they stagger and shudder and swerve and flit,
Dismantled of masts and of yards, with sails by the fangs of the storm-wind split.
But north of the headland whose name is Wrath, by the wrath or the ruth of the sea,

They are swept or sustained to the westward, and drive through the rollers aloof to the lee.
Some strive yet northward for Iceland, and perish: but some through the storm-hewn straits
That sunder the Shetlands and Orkneys are borne of the breath which is God's or fate's:
And some, by the dawn of September, at last give thanks as for stars that smile,
For the winds have swept them to shelter and sight of the cliffs of a Catholic isle.
Though many the fierce rocks feed on, and many the merciless heretic slays,
Yet some that have labored to land with their treasure are trustful, and give God praise.
And the kernes of murderous Ireland, athirst with a greed everlasting of blood,
Unslakable ever with slaughter and spoil, rage down as a ravening flood,
To slay and to flay of their shining apparel their brethren whom shipwreck spares;
Such faith and such mercy, such love and such manhood, such hands and such hearts are theirs.
Short shrift to her foes gives England, but shorter doth Ireland to friends; and worse
Fare they that come with a blessing on treason than they that come with a curse.
Hacked, harried, and mangled of axes and skenes, three thousand naked and dead
Bear witness of Catholic Ireland, what sons of what sires at her breasts are bred.
Winds are pitiful, waves are merciful, tempest and storm are kind:
The waters that smite may spare, and the thunder is deaf, and the lightning is blind:
Of these perchance at his need may a man, though they know it not, yet find grace;
But grace, if another be hardened against him, he gets not at this man's face.
For his ear that hears and his eye that sees the wreck and the wail of men,
And his heart that relents not within him, but hungers, are like as the wolf's in his den.
Worthy are these to worship their master, the murderous Lord of lies,
Who hath given to the pontiff his servant the keys of the pit and the keys of the skies.
Wild famine and red-shod rapine are cruel, and bitter with blood are their feasts;
But fiercer than famine and redder than rapine the hands and the hearts of priests.
God, God bade these to the battle; and here, on a land by his servants trod,
They perish, a lordly blood-offering, subdued by the hands of the servants of God.
These also were fed of his priests with faith, with the milk of his word and the wine;
These too are fulfilled with the spirit of darkness that guided their quest divine.
And here, cast up from the ravening sea on the mild land's merciful breast,
This comfort they find of their fellows in worship; this guerdon is theirs of their quest.
Death was captain, and doom was pilot, and darkness the chart of their way;
Night and hell had in charge and in keeping the host of the foes of day.
Invincible, vanquished, impregnable, shattered, a sign to her foes of fear,
A sign to the world and the stars of laughter, the fleet of the Lord lies here.
Nay, for none may declare the place of the ruin wherein she lies;
Nay, for none hath beholden the grave whence never a ghost shall rise.
The fleet of the foemen of England hath found not one but a thousand graves;
And he that shall number and name them shall number by name and by tale the waves.

VII

I

Sixtus, Pope of the Church whose hope takes flight for heaven to dethrone the sun,
Philip, king that wouldst turn our spring to winter, blasted, appalled, undone,
Prince and priest, let a mourner's feast give thanks to God for your conquest won.

England's heel is upon you: kneel, O priest, O prince, in the dust, and cry,
'Lord, why thus? art thou wroth with us whose faith was great in thee, God most high?
Whence is this, that the serpent's hiss derides us? Lord, can thy pledged word lie?

'God of hell, are its flames that swell
quenched now for ever, extinct and dead?
Who shall fear thee? or who shall hear
the word thy servants who feared thee said?
Lord, art thou as the dead gods now, whose
arm is shortened, whose rede is read?

'Yet we thought it was not for naught thy
word was given us, to guard and guide:
Yet we deemed that they had not dreamed
who put their trust in thee. Hast thou
lied?
God our Lord, was the sacred sword we
drew not drawn on thy Church's side?

'England hates thee as hell's own gates;
and England triumphs, and Rome bows
down:
England mocks at thee; England's rocks
cast off thy servants to drive and
drown:
England loathes thee; and fame betroths
and plights with England her faith for
crown.

'Spain clings fast to thee; Spain, aghast
with anguish, cries to thee; where art
thou?
Spain puts trust in thee; lo, the dust that
soils and darkens her prostrate brow!
Spain is true to thy service; who shall raise
up Spain for thy service now?

'Who shall praise thee, if none may raise
thy servants up, nor affright thy foes?
Winter wanes, and the woods and plains
forget the likeness of storms and
snows:
So shall fear of thee fade even here: and
what shall follow thee no man knows.'

Lords of night, who would breathe your
blight on April's morning and August's
noon,
God your Lord, the condemned, the ab-
horred, sinks hellward, smitten with
deathlike swoon:
Death's own dart in his hateful heart now
thrills, and night shall receive him
soon.

God the Devil, thy reign of revel is here
for ever eclipsed and fled:
God the Liar, everlasting fire lays hold at
last on thee, hand and head:
God the Accurst, the consuming thirst that
burns thee never shall here be fed.

II

England, queen of the waves whose green
inviolate girdle enrings thee round,
Mother fair as the morning, where is now
the place of thy foemen found?
Still the sea that salutes us free proclaims
them stricken, acclaims thee crowned.

Times may change, and the skies grow
strange with signs of treason and fraud
and fear:
Foes in union of strange communion may
rise against thee from far and near:
Sloth and greed on thy strength may feed as
cankers waxing from year to year.

Yet, though treason and fierce unreason
should league and lie and defame and
smite,
We that know thee, how far below thee the
hatred burns of the sons of night,
We that love thee, behold above thee the
witness written of life in light.

Life that shines from thee shows forth
signs that none may read not but eyeless
foes:
Hate, born blind, in his abject mind grows
hopeful now but as madness grows:
Love, born wise, with exultant eyes adores
thy glory, beholds and glows.

Truth is in thee, and none may win thee
to lie, forsaking the face of truth:
Freedom lives by the grace she gives thee,
born again from thy deathless youth:
Faith should fail, and the world turn pale,
wert thou the prey of the serpent's
tooth.

Greed and fraud, unabashed, unawed, may
strive to sting thee at heel in vain:
Craft and fear and mistrust may leer and
mourn and murmur and plead and
plain:
Thou art thou: and thy sunbright brow is
hers that blasted the strength of Spain.

Mother, mother belovèd, none other could
claim in place of thee England's place:
Earth bears none that beholds the sun so
pure of record, so clothed with grace:
Dear our mother, nor son nor brother is
thine, as strong or as fair of face.

How shalt thou be abased? or how shall
fear take hold of thy heart? of thine.

England, maiden immortal, laden with charge
of life and with hopes divine?
Earth shall wither, when eyes turned hither
behold not light in her darkness shine.

England, none that is born thy son, and
lives, by grace of thy glory, free,
Lives and yearns not at heart and burns
with hope to serve as he worships thee;
None may sing thee: the sea-wind's wing
beats down our songs as it hails the
sea.

(1889)

COR CORDIUM

O Heart of hearts, the chalice of love's fire,
Hid round with flowers and all the bounty
of bloom;
O wonderful and perfect heart, for whom
The lyrist liberty made life a lyre;
O heavenly heart, at whose most dear de-
sire
Dead love, living and singing, cleft his
tomb,
And with him risen and regent in death's
room
All day thy choral pulses rang full choir;
O heart whose beating blood was running
song,
O sole thing sweeter than thine own songs
were,
Help us for thy free love's sake to be free,
True for thy truth's sake, for thy strength's
sake strong,
Till very liberty make clean and fair
The nursing earth as the sepulchral sea.

(1871)

'NON DOLET'

It does not hurt. She looked along the
knife
Smiling, and watched the thick drops mix
and run
Down the sheer blade: not that which had
been done
Could hurt the sweet sense of the Roman
wife,
But that which was to do yet ere the
strife
Could end for each for ever, and the sun:
Nor was the palm yet nor was peace yet
won
While pain had power upon her husband's
life.
It does not hurt, Italia. Thou art more
Than bride to bridegroom: how shalt thou
not take
The gift love's blood has reddened for thy
sake?
Was not thy life-blood given for us be-
fore?
And if love's heart-blood can avail thy need,
And thou not die, how should it hurt in-
deed?

(1871)

ON THE DEATHS OF THOMAS CARLYLE AND GEORGE ELIOT

Two souls diverse out of our human sight
Pass, followed one with love and each with
wonder:
The stormy sophist with his mouth of thun-
der,
Clothed with loud words and mantled in the
might
Of darkness and magnificence of night;
And one whose eye could smite the night
in sunder,
Searching if light or no light were there-
under,
And found in love of loving-kindness light.
Duty divine and Thought with eyes of fire
Still following Righteousness with deep de-
sire
Shone sole and stern before her and above
Sure stars and sole to steer by; but more
sweet
Shone lower the loveliest lamp for earthly
feet,—
The light of little children, and their love.

(1881)

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

Crowned, girdled, garbed, and shod with
light and fire,
Son first-born of the morning, sovereign
star!
Soul nearest ours of all, that wert most far,
Most far off in the abysm of time, thy lyre
Hung highest above the dawn-enkindled
quire
Where all ye sang together, all that are,
And all the starry songs behind thy car
Rang sequence, all our souls acclaim thee
sire.

'If all the pens that ever poets held
Had fed the feeling of their masters'
thoughts,'
And as with rush of hurtling chariots
The flight of all their spirits were impelled
Toward one great end, thy glory — nay, not
then,
Not yet mightst thou be praised enough of
men.

(1882)

WALTER HORATIO PATER (1839–1894)

Pater began his life-long academic career at King's School, Canterbury, from which he proceeded to Queen's College, Oxford, where he took his bachelor's degree in 1862. As an undergraduate Pater knew few men, devoting himself closely to books, especially to Greek literature, in which Benjamin Jowett gave him much encouragement. After graduation he was elected to the Old Mortality, an essay society, through which he came into contact with the stimulating personalities of T. H. Green, A. C. Swinburne, and others. In 1864, he was elected fellow of Brasenose College, and except for visits to the Continent and a short residence in London, he remained in Oxford for the rest of his life. In 1865, a sojourn in Italy gave Pater those impressions of Renaissance art that appear conspicuously in his later writing. The quiet poise of his life as Oxford tutor and author was disturbed by nothing more eventful than an occasional vacation tour in France or Germany.

Pater's most significant mission was in interpreting to his age the spirit of the Renaissance in art and literature. His first essays, which had begun to appear in periodicals in 1867, were collected and published in a considerable volume, *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, in 1873. In 1885 appeared Pater's finest single work. *Marius the Epicurean*, a historical romance expounding the best phases of Epicureanism. His *Imaginary Portraits* (1887) contains fine studies in philosophic fiction, and his *Appreciations, with an Essay on Style* (1889) reveals bits of his most subtle literary criticism. *Plato and Platonism* (1893) is a notable result of his early classical studies. Pater's somewhat painful seeking for precision of expression resulted in a style more delicate and rhythmical than direct and simple. His philosophy of temperance, discipline, and asceticism in art has had a permanent and refining influence upon English criticism.

STYLE

Since all progress of mind consists for the most part in differentiation, in the resolution of an obscure and complex object into its component aspects, it is surely the stupidest of losses to confuse things which right reason has put asunder, to lose the sense of achieved distinctions, the distinction between poetry and prose, for instance, or, to speak more exactly, between the laws and characteristic excellences of verse and prose composition. On the other hand, those who have dwelt most emphatically on the distinction between prose and verse, prose and poetry, may sometimes have been tempted to limit the proper functions of prose too narrowly; and this again is at least false economy, as being, in effect, the renunciation of a certain means or faculty, in a world where after all we must needs make the most of things. Critical efforts to limit art *a priori*, by anticipations regarding the natural incapacity of the material with which this or that artist works, as the sculptor with solid form, or the prose-writer with the ordinary language of men, are always liable to be discredited by the facts of artistic production; and while prose is actually found to be a colored thing with Bacon, picturesque with Livy and Carlyle, musical with Cicero and Newman, mystical and intimate with Plato and Michelet and Sir Thomas Browne, exalted or florid, it may be, with Milton and Taylor, it will be useless to protest that it can be nothing at all, except something very tamely and narrowly confined to mainly practical ends — a kind of 'good round-hand'; as useless as the protest that poetry might not touch prosaic subjects as with Wordsworth, or an abstruse matter as with Browning, or treat contemporary life nobly as with Tennyson. In subordination to one essential beauty in all good literary style, in all literature as a fine art, as there are many beauties of poetry, so the beauties of prose are many, and it is the business of criticism to

estimate them as such; as it is good in the criticism of verse to look for those hard, logical and quasi-prosaic excellences which that too has, or needs. To find in the poem, amid the flowers, the allusions, the mixed perspectives, of *Lycidas* for instance, the thought, the logical structure: — how wholesome! how delightful! as to identify in prose what we call the poetry, the imaginative power, not treating it as out of place and a kind of vagrant intruder, but by way of an estimate of its rights, that is, of its achieved powers, there.

Dryden, with the characteristic instinct of his age, loved to emphasize the distinction between poetry and prose, the protest against their confusion with each other, coming with somewhat diminished effect from one whose poetry was so prosaic. In truth, his sense of prosaic excellence affected his verse rather than his prose, which is not only fervid, richly figured, poetic, as we say, but vitiated, all unconsciously, by many a scanning line. Setting up correctness, that humble merit of prose, as the central literary excellence, he is really a less correct writer than he may seem, still with an imperfect mastery of the relative pronoun. It might have been foreseen that, in the rotations of mind, the province of poetry in prose would find its assertor; and, a century after Dryden, amid very different intellectual needs, and with the need therefore of great modifications in literary form, the range of the poetic force in literature was effectively enlarged by Wordsworth. The true distinction between prose and poetry he regarded as the almost technical or accidental one of the absence or presence of metrical beauty, or, say! metrical restraint; and for him the opposition came to be between verse and prose of course; but, as the essential dichotomy in this matter, between imaginative and unimaginative writing, parallel to De Quincey's distinction between 'the literature of power and the literature of knowledge,' in the former of which the composer gives us not fact, but his peculiar sense of fact, whether past or present.

Dismissing then, under sanction of Wordsworth, that harsher opposition of poetry to prose, as savoring in fact of the arbitrary psychology of the last century, and with it the prejudice that there can be but one only beauty of prose style, I propose here to point out certain qualities of all literature as a fine art, which, if they apply to the literature of fact, apply still more to the literature of the imaginative sense of fact, while they apply indifferently to verse and prose, so far as either is really imaginative — certain conditions of true art in both alike, which conditions may also contain in them the secret of the proper discrimination and guardianship of the peculiar excellences of either.

The line between fact and something quite different from external fact is, indeed, hard to draw. In Pascal, for instance, in the persuasive writers generally, how difficult to define the point where, from time to time, argument which, if it is to be worth anything at all, must consist of facts or groups of facts, becomes a pleading — a theorem no longer, but essentially an appeal to the reader to catch the writer's spirit, to think with him, if one can or will — an expression no longer of fact but of his sense of it, his peculiar intuition of a world prospective, or discerned below the faulty conditions of the present, in either case changed somewhat from the actual world. In science, on the other hand, in history so far as it conforms to scientific rule, we have a literary domain where the imagination may be thought to be always an intruder. And as, in all science, the functions of literature reduce themselves eventually to the transcribing of fact, so all the excellences of literary form in regard to science are reducible to various kinds of painstaking; this good quality being involved in all 'skilled work' whatever, in the drafting of an act of parliament, as in sewing. Yet here again, the writer's sense of fact, in history especially, and in all those complex subjects which do but lie on the borders of science, will still take the place of fact, in various degrees. Your historian, for instance, with absolutely truthful intention, amid the multitude of facts presented to him must needs select, and in selecting assert something of his own humor, something that comes not of the world without but of a vision within. So Gibbon molds his unwieldy material to a preconceived

view. Livy, Tacitus, Michelet, moving full of poignant sensibility amid the records of the past, each, after his own sense, modifies — who can tell where and to what degree? — and becomes something else than a transcriber; each, as he thus modifies, passing into the domain of art proper. For just in proportion as the writer's aim, consciously or unconsciously, comes to be the transcribing, not of the world, not of mere fact, but of his sense of it, he becomes an artist, his work *fine* art; and good art (as I hope ultimately to show) in proportion to the truth of his presentment of that sense; as in those humbler or plainer functions of literature also, truth — truth to bare fact, there — is the essence of such artistic quality as they may have. Truth! there can be no merit, no craft at all, without that. And further, all beauty is in the long run only *fineness* of truth, or what we call expression, the finer accommodation of speech to that vision within.

— The transcript of his sense of fact rather than the fact, as being preferable, pleasanter, more beautiful to the writer himself. In literature, as in every other product of human skill, in the molding of a bell or a platter for instance, wherever this sense asserts itself, wherever the producer so modifies his work as, over and above its primary use or intention, to make it pleasing (to himself, of course, in the first instance) there, 'fine' as opposed to merely serviceable art, exists. Literary art, that is, like all art which is in any way imitative or reproductive of fact — form, or color, or incident — is the representation of such fact as connected with soul, of a specific personality, in its preferences, its volition and power.

Such is the matter of imaginative or artistic literature — this transcript, not of mere fact, but of fact in its infinite variety, as modified by human preference in all its infinitely varied forms. It will be good literary art not because it is brilliant or sober, or rich, or impulsive, or severe, but just in proportion as its representation of that sense, that soul-fact, is true, verse being only one department of such literature, and imaginative prose, it may be thought, being the special art of the modern world. That imaginative prose should be the special and opportune art of the modern world results from two important facts about the latter: first, the chaotic variety and complexity of its interests, making the intellectual issue, the really master currents of the present time incalculable — a condition of mind little susceptible of the restraint proper to verse form, so that the most characteristic verse of the nineteenth century has been lawless verse; and secondly, an all-pervading naturalism, a curiosity about everything whatever as it really is, involving a certain humility of attitude, cognate to what must, after all, be the less ambitious form of literature. And prose thus asserting itself as the special and privileged artistic faculty of the present day, will be, however critics may try to narrow its scope, as varied in its excellence as humanity itself reflecting on the facts of its latest experience — an instrument of many stops, meditative, observant, descriptive, eloquent, analytic, plaintive, fervid. Its beauties will be not exclusively 'pedestrian': it will exert, in due measure, all the varied charms of poetry, down to the rhythm which, as in Cicero, or Michelet, or Newman, at their best, gives its musical value to every syllable.

The literary artist is of necessity a scholar, and in what he proposes to do will have in mind, first of all, the scholar and the scholarly conscience — the male conscience in this matter, as we must think it, under a system of education which still to so large an extent limits real scholarship to men. In his self-criticism, he supposes always that sort of reader who will go (full of eyes) warily, considerately, though without consideration for him, over the ground which the female conscience traverses so lightly, so amiably. For the material in which he works is no more a creation of his own than the sculptor's marble. Product of a myriad various minds and contending tongues, compact of obscure and minute association, a language has its own abundant and often recondite laws, in the habitual and summary recognition of which scholarship consists. A writer, full of a matter he is before all things anxious to express, may think of those laws, the limitations of vocabulary

structure, and the like, as a restriction, but if a real artist, will find in them an opportunity. His punctilious observance of the proprieties of his medium will diffuse through all he writes a general air of sensibility, of refined usage. *Exclusiones debitae naturae* — the exclusions, or rejections, which nature demands — we know how large a part these play, according to Bacon, in the science of nature. In a somewhat changed sense, we might say that the art of the scholar is summed up in the observance of those rejections demanded by the nature of his medium, the material he must use. Alive to the value of an atmosphere in which every term finds its utmost degree of expression, and with all the jealousy of a lover of words, he will resist a constant tendency on the part of the majority of those who use them to efface the distinctions of language, the facility of writers often reinforcing in this respect the work of the vulgar. He will feel the obligation not of the laws only, but of those affinities, avoidances, those mere preferences, of his language, which through the associations of literary history have become a part of its nature, prescribing the rejection of many a neology, many a license, many a gipsy phrase which might present itself as actually expressive. His appeal, again, is to the scholar, who has great experience in literature, and will show no favor to short-cuts, or hackneyed illustration, or an affectation of learning designed for the unlearned. Hence a contention, a sense of self-restraint and renunciation, having for the susceptible reader the effect of a challenge for minute consideration; the attention of the writer, in every minutest detail, being a pledge that it is worth the reader's while to be attentive too, that the writer is dealing scrupulously with his instrument, and therefore, indirectly, with the reader himself also, that he has the science of the instrument he plays on, perhaps, after all, with a freedom which in such case will be the freedom of a master.

For meanwhile, braced only by those restraints, he is really vindicating his liberty in the making of a vocabulary, an entire system of composition, for himself, his own true manner; and when we speak of the manner of a true master we mean what is essential in his art. Pedantry being only the scholarship of *le cuistre* (we have no English equivalent), he is no pedant, and does but show his intelligence of the rules of language in his freedoms with it, addition or expansion, which like the spontaneities of manner in a well-bred person will still further illustrate good taste. — The right vocabulary! Translators have not invariably seen how all-important that is in the work of translation, driving for the most part at idiom or construction; whereas, if the original be first-rate, one's first care should be with its elementary particles, Plato, for instance, being often reproducible by an exact following, with no variation in structure, of word after word, as the pencil follows a drawing under tracing-paper, so only each word or syllable be not of false color, to change my illustration a little.

Well! that is because any writer worth translating at all has winnowed and searched through his vocabulary, is conscious of the words he would select in systematic reading of a dictionary, and still more of the words he would reject were the dictionary other than Johnson's; and doing this with his peculiar sense of the world ever in view, in search of an instrument for the adequate expression of that, he begets a vocabulary faithful to the coloring of his own spirit, and in the strictest sense original. That living authority which language needs lies, in truth, in its scholars, who recognizing always that every language possesses a genius, a very fastidious genius, of its own, expand at once and purify its very elements, which must needs change along with the changing thoughts of living people. Ninety years ago, for instance, great mental force, certainly, was needed by Wordsworth, to break through the consecrated poetic associations of a century, and speak the language that was his, that was to become in a measure the language of the next generation. But he did it with the tact of a scholar also. English, for a quarter of a century past, has been assimilating the phraseology of pictorial art; for half a century, the phraseology of the great German metaphysical movement of

eighty years ago; in part also the language of mystical theology: and none but pedants will regret a great consequent increase of its resources. For many years to come its enterprise may well lie in the naturalization of the vocabulary of science, so only it be under the eye of sensitive scholarship — in a liberal naturalization of the ideas of science too, for after all, the chief stimulus of good style is to possess a full, rich, complex matter to grapple with. The literary artist, therefore, will be well aware of physical science; science also attaining, in its turn, its true literary ideal. And then, as the scholar is nothing without the historic sense, he will be apt to restore not really obsolete or really worn-out words, but the finer edge of words still in use: *ascertain, communicate, discover* — words like these it has been part of our 'business' to misuse. And still, as language was made for man, he will be no authority for correctnesses which, limiting freedom of utterance, were yet but accidents in their origin; as if one vowed not to say '*its*,' which ought to have been in Shakspere; '*his*' and '*hers*,' for inanimate objects, being but a barbarous and really inexpressive survival. Yet we have known many things like this. Racy Saxon monosyllables, close to us as touch and sight, he will intermix readily with those long, savorsome, Latin words, rich in 'second intention.' In this late day certainly, no critical process can be conducted reasonably without eclecticism. Of such eclecticism we have a justifying example in one of the first poets of our time. How illustrative of monosyllabic effect, of sonorous Latin, of the phraseology of science, of metaphysic, of colloquialism even, are the writings of Tennyson; yet with what a fine, fastidious scholarship throughout!

A scholar writing for the scholarly, he will of course leave something to the willing intelligence of his reader. 'To go preach to the first passer-by,' says Montaigne, 'to become tutor to the ignorance of the first I meet, is a thing I abhor;' a thing, in fact, naturally distressing to the scholar, who will therefore ever be shy of offering uncomplimentary assistance to the reader's wit. To really strenuous minds there is a pleasurable stimulus in the challenge for a continuous effort on their part, to be rewarded by securer and more intimate grasp of the author's sense. Self-restraint, a skilful economy of means, *ascêsis*, that too has a beauty of its own; and for the reader supposed, there will be an esthetic satisfaction in that frugal closeness of style which makes the most of a word, in the exaction from every sentence of a precise relief, in the just spacing out of word to thought, in the logically filled space connected always with the delightful sense of difficulty overcome.

Different classes of persons, at different times, make, of course, very various demands upon literature. Still, scholars, I suppose, and not only scholars, but all disinterested lovers of books, will always look to it, as to all other fine art, for a refuge, a sort of cloistral refuge, from a certain vulgarity in the actual world. A perfect poem like *Lycidas*, a perfect fiction like *Esmond*, the perfect handling of a theory like Newman's *Idea of a University*, has for them something of the uses of a religious 'retreat.' Here, then, with a view to the central need of a select few, those 'men of a finer thread' who have formed and maintain the literary ideal, everything, every component element will have undergone exact trial, and, above all, there will be no uncharacteristic or tarnished or vulgar decoration, permissible ornament being for the most part structural, or necessary. As the painter in his picture, so the artist in his book, aims at the production by honorable artifice of a peculiar atmosphere. 'The artist,' says Schiller, 'may be known rather by what he *omits*;' and in literature, too, the true artist may be best recognized by his tact of omission. For to the grave reader words too are grave; and the ornamental word, the figure, the accessory form or color or reference, is rarely content to die to thought precisely at the right moment, but will inevitably linger awhile, stirring a long 'brain-wave' behind it of perhaps quite alien associations.

Just there, it may be, is the detrimental tendency of the sort of scholarly attentiveness of mind I am recommending. But the true artist allows for it. He will remember that, as the very word

ornament indicates what is in itself non-essential, so the 'one beauty' of all literary style is of its very essence, and independent, in prose and verse alike, of all removable decoration; that it may exist in its fullest luster, as in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary,* for instance, or in Stendhal's *Le Rouge et Le Noir,* in a composition utterly unadorned, with hardly a single suggestion of visibly beautiful things. Parallel, allusion, the allusive way generally, the flowers in the garden: — he knows the narcotic force of these upon the negligent intelligence to which any *diversion,* literally, is welcome, any vagrant intruder, because one can go wandering away with it from the immediate subject. Jealous, if he have a really quickening motive within, of all that does not hold directly to that, of the facile, the otiose, he will never depart from the strictly pedestrian process, unless he gains a ponderable something thereby. Even assured of its congruity, he will still question its serviceableness. Is it worth while, can we afford, to attend to just that, to just that figure or literary reference, just then? — Surplusage! he will dread that, as the runner on his muscles. For in truth all art does but consist in the removal of surplusage, from the last finish of the gem-engraver blowing away the last particle of invisible dust, back to the earliest divination of the finished work to be, lying somewhere, according to Michelangelo's fancy, in the rough-hewn block of stone.

And what applies to figure or flower must be understood of all other accidental or removable ornaments of writing whatever; and not of specific ornament only, but of all that latent color and imagery which language as such carries in it. A lover of words for their own sake, to whom nothing about them is unimportant, a minute and constant observer of their physiognomy, he will be on the alert not only for obviously mixed metaphors of course, but for the metaphor that is mixed in all our speech, though a rapid use may involve no cognition of it. Currently recognizing the incident, the color, the physical elements or particles in words like *absorb, consider, extract,* to take the first that occur, he will avail himself of them, as further adding to the resources of expression. The elementary particles of language will be realized as color and light and shade through his scholarly living in the full sense of them. Still opposing the constant degradation of language by those who use it carelessly, he will not treat colored glass as if it were clear; and while half the world is using figure unconsciously, will be fully aware not only of all that latent figurative texture in speech, but of the vague, lazy, half-formed personification — a rhetoric, depressing, and worse than nothing, because it has no really rhetorical motive — which plays so large a part there, and, as in the case of more ostentatious ornament, scrupulously exact of it, from syllable to syllable, its precise value.

So far I have been speaking of certain conditions of the literary art arising out of the medium or material in or upon which it works, the essential qualities of language and its aptitudes for contingent ornamentation, matters which define scholarship as science and good taste respectively. They are both subservient to a more intimate quality of good style: more intimate, as coming nearer to the artist himself. The otiose, the facile, surplusage: why are these abhorrent to the true literary artist, except because, in literary as in all other art, structure is all-important, felt, or painfully missed, everywhere? — that architectural conception of work, which foresees the end in the beginning and never loses sight of it, and in every part is conscious of all the rest, till the last sentence does but, with undiminished vigor, unfold and justify the first — a condition of literary art, which, in contra-distinction to another quality of the artist himself, to be spoken of later, I shall call the necessity of *mind* in style.

An acute philosophical writer, the late Dean Mansel (a writer whose works illustrate the literary beauty there may be in closeness, and with obvious repression or economy of a fine rhetorical gift) wrote a book, of fascinating precision in a very obscure subject, to show that all the technical laws of logic are but means of securing, in each and all of its apprehensions, the unity, the strict identity with itself, of the apprehending mind. All the laws of good writing aim at a

similar unity or identity of the mind in all the processes by which the word is associated to its import. The term is right, and has its essential beauty, when it becomes, in a manner, what it signifies, as with the names of simple sensations. To give the phrase, the sentence, the structural member, the entire composition, song, or essay, a similar unity with its subject and with itself: — style is in the right way when it tends towards that. All depends upon the original unity, the vital wholeness and identity, of the initiatory apprehension or view. So much is true of all art, which therefore requires always its logic, its comprehensive reason — insight, foresight, retrospect, in simultaneous action — true, most of all, of the literary art, as being of all the arts most closely cognate to the abstract intelligence. Such logical coherency may be evidenced not merely in the lines of composition as a whole, but in the choice of a single word, while it by no means interferes with, but may even prescribe, much variety, in the building of the sentence for instance, or in the manner, argumentative, descriptive, discursive, of this or that part or member of the entire design. The blithe, crisp sentence, decisive as a child's expression of its needs, may alternate with the long-contending, victoriously intricate sentence; the sentence, born with the integrity of a single word, relieving the sort of sentence in which, if you look closely, you can see much contrivance, much adjustment, to bring a highly qualified matter into compass at one view. For the literary architecture, if it is to be rich and expressive, involves not only foresight of the end in the beginning, but also development or growth of design, in the process of execution, with many irregularities, surprises, and after-thoughts; the contingent as well as the necessary being subsumed under the unity of the whole. As truly, to the lack of such architectural design, of a single, almost visual, image, vigorously informing an entire, perhaps very intricate, composition, which shall be austere, ornate, argumentative, fanciful, yet true from first to last to that vision within, may be attributed those weaknesses of conscious or unconscious repetition of word, phrase, motive, or member of the whole matter, indicating, as Flaubert was aware, an original structure in thought not organically complete. With such foresight, the actual conclusion will most often get itself written out of hand, before, in the more obvious sense, the work is finished. With some strong and leading sense of the world, the tight hold of which secures true *composition* and not mere loose accretion, the literary artist, I suppose, goes on considerably, setting joint to joint, sustained by yet restraining the productive ardor, retracing the negligences of his first sketch, repeating his steps only that he may give the reader a sense of secure and restful progress, readjusting mere assonances even, that they may soothe the reader, or at least not interrupt him on his way; and then, somewhere before the end comes, is burdened, inspired, with his conclusion, and betimes delivered of it, leaving off, not in weariness and because he finds *himself* at an end, but in all the freshness of volition. His work now structurally complete, with all the accumulating effect of secondary shades of meaning, he finishes the whole up to the just proportion of that ante-penultimate conclusion, and all becomes expressive. The house he has built is rather a body he has informed. And so it happens, to its greater credit, that the better interest even of a narrative to be recounted, a story to be told, will often be in its second reading. And though there are instances of great writers who have been no artists, an unconscious tact sometimes directing work in which we may detect, very pleasurably, many of the effects of conscious art, yet one of the greatest pleasures of really good prose literature is in the critical tracing out of that conscious artistic structure, and the pervading sense of it as we read. Yet of poetic literature too; for, in truth, the kind of constructive intelligence here supposed is one of the forms of the imagination.

That is the special function of mind, in style. Mind and soul,— hard to ascertain philosophically, the distinction is real enough practically, for they often interfere, are sometimes in conflict, with each other. Blake, in the last century, is an instance of preponderating soul, embarrassed, at a loss, in an era of pre-

ponderating mind. As a quality of style, at all events, soul is a fact, in certain writers — the way they have of absorbing language, of attracting it into the peculiar spirit they are of, with a subtlety which makes the actual result seem like some inexplicable inspiration. By mind, the literary artist reaches us, through static and objective indications of design in his work, legible to all. By soul, he reaches us, somewhat capriciously perhaps, one and not another, through vagrant sympathy and a kind of immediate contact. Mind we cannot choose but approve where we recognize it; soul may repel us, not because we misunderstand it. The way in which theological interests sometimes avail themselves of language is perhaps the best illustration of the force I mean to indicate generally in literature, by the word *soul*. Ardent religious persuasion may exist, may make its way, without finding any equivalent heat in language: or, again, it may enkindle words to various degrees, and when it really takes hold of them doubles its force. Religious history presents many remarkable instances in which, through no mere phrase-worship, an unconscious literary tact has, for the sensitive, laid open a privileged pathway from one to another. 'The altar-fire,' people say, 'has touched those lips!' The Vulgate, the English Bible, the English Prayer-Book, the writings of Swedenborg, the Tracts for the Times: — there, we have instances of widely different and largely diffused phases of religious feeling in operation as soul in style. But something of the same kind acts with similar power in certain writers of quite other than theological literature, on behalf of some wholly personal and peculiar sense of theirs. Most easily illustrated by theological literature, this quality lends to profane writers a kind of religious influence. At their best, these writers become, as we say sometimes, 'prophets'; such character depending on the effect not merely of their matter, but of their matter as allied to, in 'electric affinity' with, peculiar form, and working in all cases by an immediate sympathetic contact, on which account it is that it may be called soul, as opposed to mind, in style. And this too is a faculty of choosing and rejecting what is congruous or otherwise, with a drift towards unity — unity of atmosphere here, as there of design — soul securing color (or perfume, might we say?) as mind secures form, the latter being essentially finite, the former vague or infinite, as the influence of a living person is practically infinite. There are some to whom nothing has any real interest, or real meaning, except as operative in a given person; and it is they who best appreciate the quality of soul in literary art. They seem to know a *person*, in a book, and make way by intuition: yet, although they thus enjoy the completeness of a personal information, it is still a characteristic of soul, in this sense of the word, that it does but suggest what can never be uttered, not as being different from, or more obscure than, what actually gets said, but as containing that plenary substance of which there is only one phase or facet in what is there expressed.

If all high things have their martyrs, Gustave Flaubert might perhaps rank as the martyr of literary style. In his printed correspondence, a curious series of letters, written in his twenty-fifth year, records what seems to have been his one other passion — a series of letters which, with its fine casuistries, its firmly repressed anguish, its tone of harmonious gray, and the sense of disillusion in which the whole matter ends, might have been, a few slight changes supposed, one of his own fictions. Writing to Madame X. certainly he does display, by 'taking thought' mainly, by constant and delicate pondering, as in his love for literature, a heart really moved, but still more, and as the pledge of that emotion, a loyalty to his work. Madame X., too, is a literary artist, and the best gifts he can send her are precepts of perfection in art, counsels for the effectual pursuit of that better love. In his love-letters it is the pains and pleasures of art he insists on, its solaces: he communicates secrets, reproves, encourages, with a view to that. Whether the lady was dissatisfied with such divided or indirect service, the reader is not enabled to see; but sees that, on Flaubert's part at least, a living person could be no rival of what was, from first to last, his

leading passion, a somewhat solitary and exclusive one.

'I must scold you,' he writes, 'for one thing, which shocks, scandalizes me, the small concern, namely, you show for art just now. As regards glory be it so: there, I approve. But for art! — the one thing in life that is good and real — can you compare with it an earthly love? — prefer the adoration of a relative beauty to the *cultus* of the true beauty? Well! I tell you the truth. That is the one thing good in me: the one thing I have, to me estimable. For yourself, you blend with the beautiful a heap of alien things, the useful, the agreeable, what not? —

'The only way not to be unhappy is to shut yourself up in art, and count everything else as nothing. Pride takes the place of all beside when it is established on a large basis. Work! God wills it. That, it seems to me, is clear.—

'I am reading over again the *Æncid*, certain verses of which I repeat to myself to satiety. There are phrases there which stay in one's head, by which I find myself beset, as with those musical airs which are forever returning, and cause you pain, you love them so much. I observe that I no longer laugh much, and am no longer depressed. I am ripe. You talk of my serenity, and envy me. It may well surprise you. Sick, irritated, the prey a thousand times a day of cruel pain, I continue my labor like a true working-man, who, with sleeves turned up, in the sweat of his brow, beats away at his anvil, never troubling himself whether it rains or blows, for hail or thunder. I was not like that formerly. The change has taken place naturally, though my will has counted for something in the matter.—

'Those who write in good style are sometimes accused of a neglect of ideas, and of the moral end, as if the end of the physician were something else than healing, of the painter than painting — as if the end of art were not, before all else, the beautiful.'

What, then, did Flaubert understand by beauty, in the art he pursued with so much fervor, with so much self-command? Let us hear a sympathetic commentator: —

'Possessed of an absolute belief that there exists but one way of expressing one thing, one word to call it by, one adjective to qualify, one verb to animate it, he gave himself to superhuman labor for the discovery, in every phrase, of that word, that verb, that epithet. In this way, he believed in some mysterious harmony of expression, and when a true word seemed to him to lack euphony still went on seeking another, with invincible patience, certain that he had not yet got hold of the *unique* word. . . . A thousand preoccupations would beset him at the same moment, always with this desperate certitude fixed in his spirit: Among all the expressions in the world, all forms and turns of expression, there is but *one* — one form, one mode — to express what I want to say.'

The one word for the one thing, the one thought, amid the multitude of words, terms, that might just do: the problem of style was there! — the unique word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, essay, or song, absolutely proper to the single mental presentation or vision within. In that perfect justice, over and above the many contingent and removable beauties with which beautiful style may charm us, but which it can exist without, independent of them yet dexterously availing itself of them, omnipresent in good work, in function at every point, from single epithets to the rhythm of a whole book, lay the specific, indispensable, very intellectual, beauty of literature, the possibility of which constitutes it a fine art.

One seems to detect the influence of a philosophic idea there, the idea of a natural economy, of some preëxistent adaptation, between a relative, somewhere in the world of thought, and its correlative, somewhere in the world of language — both alike, rather, somewhere in the mind of the artist, desiderative, expectant, inventive — meeting each other with the readiness of 'soul and body reunited,' in Blake's rapturous design; and, in fact, Flaubert was fond of giving his theory philosophical expression.—

'There are no beautiful thoughts,' he would say, 'without beautiful forms, and conversely. As it is impossible to extract from a physical body the qualities which really constitute it — color, extension, and the like — without reducing it to a hollow abstraction, in a word, without destroying

it; just so it is impossible to detach the form from the idea, for the idea only exists by virtue of the form.'

All the recognized flowers, the removable ornaments of literature (including harmony and ease in reading aloud, very carefully considered by him) counted certainly; for these too are part of the actual value of what one says. But still, after all, with Flaubert, the search, the unwearied research, was not for the smooth, or winsome, or forcible word, as such, as with false Ciceronians, but quite simply and honestly for the word's adjustment to its meaning. The first condition of this must be, of course, to know yourself, to have ascertained your own sense exactly. Then, if we suppose an artist, he says to the reader,— I want you to see precisely what I see. Into the mind sensitive to 'form,' a flood of random sounds, colors, incidents, is ever penetrating from the world without, to become, by sympathetic selection, a part of its very structure, and, in turn, the visible vesture and expression of that other world it sees so steadily within, nay, already with a partial conformity thereto, to be refined, enlarged, corrected, at a hundred points; and it is just there, just at those doubtful points that the function of style, as tact or taste, intervenes. The unique term will come more quickly to one than another, at one time than another, according also to the kind of matter in question. Quickness and slowness, ease and closeness alike, have nothing to do with the artistic character of the true word found at last. As there is a charm of ease, so there is also a special charm in the signs of discovery, of effort and contention towards a due end, as so often with Flaubert himself — in the style which has been pliant, as only obstinate, durable metal can be, to the inherent perplexities and recusancy of a certain difficult thought.

If Flaubert had not told us, perhaps we should never have guessed how tardy and painful his own procedure really was, and after reading his confession may think that his almost endless hesitation had much to do with diseased nerves. Often, perhaps, the felicity supposed will be the product of a happier, a more exuberant nature than Flaubert's. Aggravated, certainly, by a morbid physical condition, that anxiety in 'seeking the phrase,' which gathered all the other small *ennuis* of a really quiet existence into a kind of battle, was connected with his lifelong contention against facile poetry, facile art — art, facile and flimsy; and what constitutes the true artist is not the slowness or quickness of the process, but the absolute success of the result. As with those laborers in the parable, the prize is independent of the mere length of the actual day's work. 'You talk,' he writes, odd, trying lover, to Madame X.—

'You talk of the exclusiveness of my literary tastes. That might have enabled you to divine what kind of a person I am in the matter of love. I grow so hard to please as a literary artist, that I am driven to despair. I shall end by not writing another line.'

'Happy,' he cries, in a moment of discouragement at that patient labor, which for him, certainly, was the condition of a great success.—

'Happy those who have no doubts of themselves! who lengthen out, as the pen runs on, all that flows forth from their brains. As for me, I hesitate, I disappoint myself, turn round upon myself in despite: my taste is augmented in proportion as my natural vigor decreases, and I afflict my soul over some dubious word out of all proportion to the pleasure I get from a whole page of good writing. One would have to live two centuries to attain a true idea of any matter whatever What Buffon said is a big blasphemy: genius is not long-continued patience. Still, there is some truth in the statement, and more than people think, especially as regards our own day. Art! art! art! bitter deception! phantom that glows with light, only to lead one on to destruction.'

Again —

'I am growing so peevish about my writing. I am like a man whose ear is true but who plays falsely on the violin: his fingers refuse to reproduce precisely those sounds of which he has the inward sense. Then the tears come rolling down from the poor scraper's eyes and the bow falls from his hand.'

Coming slowly or quickly, when it comes, as it came with so much labor of mind, but also with so much luster, to Gustave Flaubert, this discovery of the word will be, like all artistic success and

felicity, incapable of strict analysis: effect of an intuitive condition of mind, it must be recognized by like intuition on the part of the reader, and a sort of immediate sense. In every one of those masterly sentences of Flaubert there was, below all mere contrivance, shaping and afterthought, by some happy instantaneous concourse of the various faculties of the mind with each other, the exact apprehension of what was *needed* to carry the meaning. And that it fits with absolute justice will be a judgment of immediate sense in the appreciative reader. We all feel this in what may be called inspired translation. Well! all language involves translation from inward to outward. In literature, as in all forms of art, there are the absolute and the merely relative or accessory beauties; and precisely in that exact proportion of the term to its purpose is the absolute beauty of style, prose or verse. All the good qualities, the beauties, of verse also, are such, only as precise expression.

In the highest as in the lowliest literature, then, the one indispensable beauty is, after all, truth: — truth to bare fact in the latter, as to some personal sense of fact, diverted somewhat from men's ordinary sense of it, in the former; truth there as accuracy, truth here as expression, that finest and most intimate form of truth, the *vraie vérité*. And what an eclectic principle this really is! employing for its one sole purpose — that absolute accordance of expression to idea — all other literary beauties and excellences whatever: how many kinds of style it covers, explains, justifies, and at the same time safeguards! Scott's facility, Flaubert's deeply pondered evocation of 'the phrase,' are equally good art. Say what you have to say, what you have a will to say, in the simplest, the most direct and exact manner possible, with no surplusage: — there, is the justification of the sentence so fortunately born, 'entire, smooth, and round,' that it needs no punctuation, and also (that is the point!) of the most elaborate period, if it be right in its elaboration. Here is the office of ornament: here also the purpose of restraint in ornament. As the exponent of truth, that austerity (the beauty, the function, of which in literature Flaubert understood so well) becomes not the correctness or purism of the mere scholar, but a security against the otiose, a jealous exclusion of what does not really tell towards the pursuit of relief, of life and vigor in the portraiture of one's sense. License again, the making free with rule, if it be indeed, as people fancy, a habit of genius, flinging aside or transforming all that opposes the liberty of beautiful production, will be but faith to one's own meaning. The seeming baldness of *Le Rouge et Le Noir* is nothing in itself; the wild ornament of *Les Misérables* is nothing in itself; and the restraint of Flaubert, amid a real natural opulence, only redoubled beauty — the phrase so large and so precise at the same time, hard as bronze, in service to the more perfect adaptation of words to their matter. Afterthoughts, retouchings, finish, will be of profit only so far as they too really serve to bring out the original, initiative, generative, sense in them.

In this way, according to the well-known saying, 'The style is the man,' complex for simple, in his individuality, his plenary sense of what he really has to say, his sense of the world; all cautions regarding style arising out of so many natural scruples as to the medium through which alone he can expose that inward sense of things, the purity of this medium, its laws or tricks of refraction: nothing is to be left there which might give conveyance to any matter save that. Style in all its varieties, reserved or opulent, terse, abundant, musical, stimulant, academic, so long as each is really characteristic or expressive, finds thus its justification, the sumptuous good taste of Cicero being as truly the man himself, and not another, justified, yet insured inalienably to him, thereby, as would have been his portrait by Raphael, in full consular splendor, on his ivory chair.

A relegation, you may say perhaps — a relegation of style to the subjectivity, the mere caprice, of the individual, which must soon transform it into mannerism. Not so! since there is, under the conditions supposed, for those elements of the man, for every lineament of the vision within, the one word, the one acceptable word, recognizable by the sensitive, by others 'who have intelligence' in the matter, as absolutely as ever anything can be in the evanescent and delicate region

of human language. The style, the manner, would be the man, not in his unreasoned and really uncharacteristic caprices, involuntary or affected, but in absolutely sincere apprehension of what is most real to him. But let us hear our French guide again.—

'Styles,' says Flaubert's commentator, '*Styles*, as so many peculiar molds, each of which bears the mark of a particular writer, who is to pour into it the whole content of his ideas, were no part of his theory. What he believed in was *Style:* that is to say, a certain absolute and unique manner of expressing a thing, in all its intensity and color. For him the *form* was the work itself. As in living creatures, the blood, nourishing the body, determines its very contour and external aspect, just so, to his mind, the *matter*, the basis, in a work of art, imposed necessarily, the unique, the just expression, the measure, the rhythm — the *form* in all its characteristics.'

If the style be the man, in all the color and intensity of a veritable apprehension, it will be in a real sense 'impersonal.'

I said, thinking of books like Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, that prose literature was the characteristic art of the nineteenth century, as others, thinking of its triumphs since the youth of Bach, have assigned that place to music. Music and prose literature are, in one sense, the opposite terms of art; the art of literature presenting to the imagination, through the intelligence, a range of interests, as free and various as those which music presents to it through sense. And certainly the tendency of what has been here said is to bring literature too under those conditions, by conformity to which music takes rank as the typically perfect art. If music be the ideal of all art whatever, precisely because in music it is impossible to distinguish the form from the substance or matter, the subject from the expression, then, literature, by finding its specific excellence in the absolute correspondence of the term to its import, will be but fulfilling the condition of all artistic quality in things everywhere, of all good art.

Good art, but not necessarily great art; the distinction between great art and good art depending immediately, as regards literature at all events, not on its form, but on the matter. Thackeray's *Esmond*, surely, is greater art than *Vanity Fair*, by the greater dignity of its interests. It is on the quality of the matter it informs or controls, its compass, its variety, its alliance to great ends, or the depth of the note of revolt, or the largeness of hope in it, that the greatness of literary art depends, as *The Divine Comedy*, *Paradise Lost*, *Les Misérables*, *The English Bible*, are great art. Given the conditions I have tried to explain as constituting good art; — then, if it be devoted further to the increase of men's happiness, to the redemption of the oppressed, or the enlargement of our sympathies with each other, or to such presentment of new or old truth about ourselves and our relation to the world as may ennoble and fortify us in our sojourn here, or immediately, as with Dante, to the glory of God, it will be also great art; if, over and above those qualities I summed up as mind and soul — that color and mystic perfume, and that reasonable structure, it has something of the soul of humanity in it, and finds its logical, its architectural place, in the great structure of human life. (1888)

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (1850–1894).

Stevenson's great-grandfather, grandfather, and father were engineers to the Board of Northern Lighthouses, and he was educated for the family profession. At twenty-one he asked to be allowed to give up engineering for literature, and his father consented on condition that he qualified for the Scottish Bar. Stevenson fulfilled the condition, but took as little interest in his legal as in his engineering studies, setting far more store 'by certain other odds and ends that he came by in the open street while he was playing truant.' At his chosen pursuit of literature, however, he toiled incessantly. He says: 'I imagine nobody had ever such pains to learn a trade as I had; but I slogged at it day in and day out; and I frankly believe (thanks to my dire industry) I have done more with smaller gifts than almost any man of letters in the world.' As a schoolboy he edited magazines and wrote essays, stories and plays; his first novel was turned into a historical essay and privately printed when he was sixteen. As an undergraduate at Edinburgh he established the University Magazine which 'ran four months in undisturbed obscurity and died without a gasp.' In 1873–4 he had half-a-dozen articles in various magazines, and his first book, *An Inland Voyage*, was published in 1878. It is an account of a canoe trip in Belgium and France made two years earlier. About this time Stevenson met and fell in love with Mrs. Fanny Osbourne, an American lady who came to study art in France. In 1878 she returned to California, and thither in 1879 Stevenson followed her. Some of his experiences in crossing the Atlantic and the American continent (though by no means all the sufferings he endured) are told in *The Amateur Emigrant* and *Across the Plains*. He arrived at San Francisco in desperate straits of health and pocket, and only Mrs. Osbourne's devoted nursing saved his life. After his recovery, they were married, and spent their honeymoon in the neighboring mountains, described in *The Silverado Squatters*. His first volume of essays, *Virginibus Puerisque*, was highly appreciated, but only by a few: it was a book for boys, *Treasure Island*, which made him suddenly famous. *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *Kidnapped* were equally successful. During these years he was living in various health resorts in Europe and America; in 1888 he went for a long voyage in the Pacific, at the end of which he bought an estate and settled in Samoa. He endeared himself to the natives, and in spite of continued illness, did some of his best literary work. The year before his death he wrote: 'For fourteen years I have not had a day's real health; I have wakened sick and gone to bed weary; and I have done my work unflinchingly. I have written in bed, and written out of it, written in hemorrhages, written in sickness, written torn by coughing, written when my hand swam for weakness; and for so long, it seems to me I have won my wager and recovered my glove. I am better now, have been, rightly speaking, since first I came to the Pacific; and still, few are the days when I am not in some physical distress. And the battle goes on — ill or well, is a trifle: so as it goes. I was made for a contest, and the Powers have so willed that my battlefield should be this dingy, inglorious one of the bed and the physic bottle.' He was buried at the top of the mountain overlooking his Samoan home in a tomb inscribed with his own *Requiem:*

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
  And I laid me down with a will.
This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
  And the hunter home from the hill.

THE FOREIGNER AT HOME

'This is no my ain house;
I ken by the biggin' o't.'

Two recent books,[1] one by Mr. Grant White on England, one on France by the diabolically clever Mr. Hillebrand, may well have set people thinking on the divisions of races and nations. Such thoughts should arise with particular congruity and force to inhabitants of that United Kingdom, people from so many different stocks, babbling so many different dialects, and offering in its extent such singular contrasts, from the busiest over-population to the unkindliest desert, from the Black Country to the Moor of Rannoch. It is not only when we cross the seas that we go abroad; there are foreign parts of England; and the race that has conquered so wide an empire has not yet managed to assimilate the islands whence she sprang. Ireland, Wales, and the Scottish mountains still cling, in part, to their old Gaelic speech. It was but the other day that English triumphed in Cornwall, and they still show in Mousehole, on St. Michael's Bay, the house of the last Cornish-speaking woman. English itself, which will now frank the traveler through the most of North America, through the greater South Sea Islands, in India, along much of the coast of Africa, and in the ports of China and Japan, is still to be heard, in its home country, in half a hundred varying stages of transition. You may go all over the States, and — setting aside the actual intrusion and influence of foreigners, negro, French, or Chinese — you shall scarce meet with so marked a difference of accent as in the forty miles between Edinburgh and Glasgow, or of dialect as in the hundred miles between Edinburgh and Aberdeen. Book English has gone round the world, but at home we still preserve the racy idioms of our fathers, and every county, in some parts every dale, has its own quality of speech, vocal or verbal. In like manner, local custom and prejudice, even local religion and local law, linger on into the latter end of the nineteenth century — *imperia in imperio* [kingdoms within the kingdom], foreign things at home.

In spite of these promptings to reflection, ignorance of his neighbors is the character of the typical John Bull. His is a domineering nature, steady in fight, imperious to command, but neither curious nor quick about the life of others. In French colonies, and still more in the Dutch, I have read that there is an immediate and lively contact between the dominant and the dominated race, that a certain sympathy is begotten, or at the least a transfusion of prejudices, making life easier for both. But the Englishman sits apart, bursting with pride and ignorance. He figures among his vassals in the hour of peace with the same disdainful air that led him on to victory. A passing enthusiasm for some foreign art or fashion may deceive the world, it cannot impose upon his intimates. He may be amused by a foreigner as by a monkey, but he will never condescend to study him with any patience. Miss Bird, an authoress with whom I profess myself in love, declares all the viands of Japan to be uneatable — a staggering pretension. So, when the Prince of Wales's marriage was celebrated at Mentone by a dinner to the Mentonese, it was proposed to give them solid English fare — roast beef and plum pudding, and no tomfoolery. Here we have either pole of the Britannic folly. We will not eat the food of any foreigner; nor, when we have the chance, will we suffer him to eat of it himself. The same spirit inspired Miss Bird's American missionaries, who had come thousands of miles to change the faith of Japan, and openly professed their ignorance of the religions they were trying to supplant.

I quote an American in this connection without scruple. Uncle Sam is better than John Bull, but he is tarred with the English stick. For Mr. Grant White the States are the New England States and nothing more. He wonders at the amount of drinking in London; let him try San Francisco. He wittily reproves English ignorance as to the status of women in America; but has he not himself forgotten Wyoming? The name Yankee, of which he is so tenacious, is used over the most of the great Union as a term of reproach. The Yankee States, of which he is so staunch a subject, are but a drop in the bucket. And we find in his book a vast virgin ignorance of the life and prospects of America; every view partial, parochial,

[1] 1881.

not raised to the horizon; the moral feeling proper, at the largest, to a clique of States; and the whole scope and atmosphere not American, but merely Yankee. I will go far beyond him in reprobating the assumption and the incivility of my countryfolk to their cousins from beyond the sea; I grill in my blood over the silly rudeness of our newspaper articles; and I do not know where to look when I find myself in company with an American and see my countrymen unbending to him as to a performing dog. But in the case of Mr. Grant White example were better than precept. Wyoming, is, after all, more readily accessible to Mr. White than Boston to the English, and the New England self-sufficiency no better justified than the Britannic.

It is so, perhaps, in all countries; perhaps in all, men are most ignorant of the foreigners at home. John Bull is ignorant of the States; he is probably ignorant of India; but considering his opportunities, he is far more ignorant of countries nearer his own door. There is one country, for instance — its frontier not so far from London, its people closely akin, its language the same in all essentials with the English — of which I will go bail he knows nothing. His ignorance of the sister kingdom cannot be described; it can only be illustrated by anecdote. I once traveled with a man of plausible manners and good intelligence,— a university man, as the phrase goes,— a man, besides, who had taken his degree in life and knew a thing or two about the age we live in. We were deep in talk, whirling between Peterborough and London; among other things, he began to describe some piece of legal injustice he had recently encountered, and I observed in my innocence that things were not so in Scotland. 'I beg your pardon,' said he, 'this is a matter of law.' He had never heard of the Scots law; nor did he choose to be informed. The law was the same for the whole country, he told me roundly; every child knew that. At last, to settle matters, I explained to him that I was a member of a Scottish legal body, and had stood the brunt of an examination in the very law in question. Thereupon he looked me for a moment full in the face and dropped the conversation. This is a monstrous instance, if you like, but it does not stand alone in the experience of Scots.

England and Scotland differ, indeed, in law, in history, in religion, in education, and in the very look of nature and men's faces, not always widely, but always trenchantly. Many particulars that struck Mr. Grant White, a Yankee, struck me, a Scot, no less forcibly; he and I felt ourselves foreigners on many common provocations. A Scotchman may tramp the better part of Europe and the United States, and never again receive so vivid an impression of foreign travel and strange lands and manners as on his first excursion into England. The change from a hilly to a level country strikes him with delighted wonder. Along the flat horizon there arise the frequent venerable towers of churches. He sees at the end of airy vistas the revolution of the windmill sails. He may go where he pleases in the future; he may see Alps, and Pyramids, and lions; but it will be hard to beat the pleasure of that moment. There are, indeed, few merrier spectacles than that of many windmills bickering together in a fresh breeze over a woody country; their halting alacrity of movement, their pleasant business, making bread all day with uncouth gesticulations, their air, gigantically human, as of a creature half alive, put a spirit of romance into the tamest landscape. When the Scotch child sees them first he falls immediately in love; and from that time forward windmills keep turning in his dreams. And so, in their degree, with every feature of the life and landscape. The warm, habitable age of towns and hamlets, the green, settled, ancient look of the country; the lush hedgerows, stiles and privy pathways in the fields; the sluggish, brimming rivers; chalk and smock-frocks; chimes of bells and the rapid, pertly sounding English speech — they are all new to the curiosity; they are all set to English airs in the child's story that he tells himself at night. The sharp edge of novelty wears off; the feeling is scotched, but I doubt whether it is ever killed. Rather it keeps returning, ever the more rarely and strangely, and even in scenes to which you have been long accustomed suddenly awakes and gives a relish to enjoyment or heightens the sense of isolation.

One thing especially continues unfamiliar to the Scotchman's eye — the domestic architecture, the look of streets and buildings; the quaint, venerable age of many, and the thin walls and warm coloring of all. We have, in Scotland, far fewer ancient buildings, above all in country places; and those that we have are all of hewn or harled masonry. Wood has been sparingly used in their construction; the window-frames are sunken in the wall, not flat to the front, as in England; the roofs are steeper-pitched; even a hill farm will have a massy, square, cold, and permanent appearance. English houses, in comparison, have the look of cardboard toys, such as a puff might shatter. And to this the Scotchman never becomes used. His eye can never rest consciously on one of these brick houses — rickles of brick, as he might call them — or on one of these flat-chested streets, but he is instantly reminded where he is, and instantly travels back in fancy to his home. 'This is no my ain house; I ken by the biggin' o't.' And yet perhaps it is his own, bought with his own money, the key of it long polished in his pocket; but it has not yet, and never will be, thoroughly adopted by his imagination; nor does he cease to remember that, in the whole length and breadth of his native country, there was no building even distantly resembling it.

But it is not alone in scenery and architecture that we count England foreign. The constitution of society, the very pillars of the empire, surprise and even pain us. The dull, neglected peasant, sunk in matter, insolent, gross, and servile, makes a startling contrast with our own long-legged, long-headed, thoughtful, Bible-quoting plowman. A week or two in such a place as Suffolk leaves the Scotchman gasping. It seems incredible that within the boundaries of his own island a class should have been thus forgotten. Even the educated and intelligent, who hold our own opinions and speak in our own words, yet seem to hold them with a difference or from another reason, and to speak on all things with less interest and conviction. The first shock of English society is like a cold plunge. It is possible that the Scot comes looking for too much, and to be sure his first experiment will be in the wrong direction. Yet surely his complaint is grounded; surely the speech of Englishmen is too often lacking in generous ardor, the better part of the man too often withheld from the social commerce, and the contact of mind with mind evaded as with terror. A Scotch peasant will talk more liberally out of his own experience. He will not put you by with conversational counters and small jests; he will give you the best of himself, like one interested in life and man's chief end. A Scotchman is vain, interested in himself and others, eager for sympathy, setting forth his thoughts and experience in the best light. The egoism of the Englishman is self-contained. He does not seek to proselytize. He takes no interest in Scotland or the Scotch, and, what is the unkindest cut of all, he does not care to justify his indifference. Give him the wages of going on and being an Englishman, that is all he asks; and in the meantime, while you continue to associate, he would rather not be reminded of your baser origin. Compared with the grand, tree-like self-sufficiency of his demeanor, the vanity and curiosity of the Scot seem uneasy, vulgar, and immodest. That you should continually try to establish human and serious relations, that you should actually feel an interest in John Bull, and desire and invite a return of interest from him, may argue something more awake and lively in your mind, but it still puts you in the attitude of a suitor and a poor relation. Thus even the lowest class of the educated English towers over a Scotchman by the head and shoulders.

Different indeed is the atmosphere in which Scotch and English youth begin to look about them, come to themselves in life, and gather up those first apprehensions which are the material of future thought and, to a great extent, the rule of future conduct. I have been to school in both countries, and I found, in the boys of the North, something at once rougher and more tender, at once more reserve and more expansion, a greater habitual distance checkered by glimpses of a nearer intimacy, and on the whole wider extremes of temperament and sensibility. The boy of the South seems more wholesome, but less thoughtful; he gives himself to games as to a business, striving to

excel, but is not readily transported by imagination; the type remains with me as cleaner in mind and body, more active, fonder of eating, endowed with a lesser and a less romantic sense of life and of the future, and more immersed in present circumstances. And certainly, for one thing, English boys are younger for their age. Sabbath observance make a series of grim, and perhaps serviceable, pauses in the tenor of Scotch boyhood — days of great stillness and solitude for the rebellious mind, when in the dearth of books and play, and in the intervals of studying the Shorter Catechism, the intellect and senses prey upon and test each other. The typical English Sunday, with the huge midday dinner and the plethoric afternoon, leads perhaps to different results. About the very cradle of the Scot there goes a hum of metaphysical divinity; and the whole of two divergent systems is summed up, not merely speciously, in the two first questions of the rival catechisms, the English tritely inquiring, 'What is your name?' the Scottish striking at the very roots of life with, 'What is the chief end of man?' and answering nobly, if obscurely, 'To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.' I do not wish to make an idol of the Shorter Catechism; but the fact of such a question being asked opens to us Scotch a great field of speculation; and the fact that it is asked of all of us, from the peer to the plowboy, binds us more nearly together. No Englishman of Byron's age, character, and history, would have had patience for long theological discussions on the way to fight for Greece; but the daft Gordon blood and the Aberdonian schooldays kept their influence to the end. We have spoken of the material conditions; nor need much more be said of these: of the land lying everywhere more exposed, of the wind always louder and bleaker, of the black, roaring winters, of the gloom of high-lying, old stone cities, imminent on the windy seaboard; compared with the level streets, the warm coloring of the brick, the domestic quaintness of the architecture, among which English children begin to grow up and come to themselves in life. As the stage of the university approaches, the contrast becomes more express. The English lad goes to Oxford or Cambridge; there, in an ideal world of gardens, to lead a semi-scenic life, costumed, disciplined, and drilled by proctors. Nor is this to be regarded merely as a stage of education; it is a piece of privilege besides, and a step that separates him further from the bulk of his compatriots. At an earlier age the Scottish lad begins his greatly different experience of crowded classrooms, of a gaunt quadrangle, of a bell hourly booming over the traffic of the city to recall him from the public-house where he has been lunching, or the streets where he has been wandering fancy-free. His college life has little of restraint, and nothing of necessary gentility. He will find no quiet clique of the exclusive, studious, and cultured; no rotten borough of the arts. All classes rub shoulders on the greasy benches. The raffish young gentleman in gloves must measure his scholarship with the plain clownish laddie from the parish school. They separate, at the session's end, one to smoke cigars about a watering-place, the other to resume the labors of the field beside his peasant family. The first muster of a college class in Scotland is a scene of curious and painful interest; so many lads, fresh from the heather, hang round the stove in cloddish embarrassment, ruffled by the presence of their smarter comrades, and afraid of the sound of their own rustic voices. It was in these early days, I think, that Professor Blackie won the affection of his pupils, putting these uncouth, umbrageous students at their ease with ready human geniality. Thus, at least, we have a healthy democratic atmosphere to breathe in while at work; even when there is no cordiality there is always a juxtaposition of the different classes, and in the competition of study the intellectual power of each is plainly demonstrated to the other. Our tasks ended, we of the North go forth as freemen into the humming, lamplit city. At five o'clock you may see the last of us hiving from the college gates, in the glare of the shop windows, under the green glimmer of the winter sunset. The frost tingles in our blood; no proctor lies in wait to intercept us; till the bell sounds again, we are the masters of the world; and some portion of our lives is always Saturday, *la trêve de Dieu* [the truce of God].

Nor must we omit the sense of the nature of his country and his country's history gradually growing in the child's mind from story and from observation. A Scottish child hears much of shipwreck, outlying iron skerries, pitiless breakers, and great sea-lights; much of heathery mountains, wild clans, and hunted Covenanters. Breaths come to him in song of the distant Cheviots and the ring of foraying hoofs. He glories in his hard-fisted forefathers, of the iron girdle and the handful of oatmeal, who rode so swiftly and lived so sparely on their raids. Poverty, ill-luck, enterprise, and constant resolution are the fibers of the legend of his country's history. The heroes and kings of Scotland have been tragically fated; the most marking incidents in Scottish history — Flodden, Darien, or the Forty-five — were still either failures or defeats; and the fall of Wallace and the repeated reverses of the Bruce combine with the very smallness of the country to teach rather a moral than a material criterion for life. Britain is altogether small, the mere taproot of her extended empire; Scotland, again, which alone the Scottish boy adopts in his imagination, is but a little part of that, and avowedly cold, sterile, and unpopulous. It is not so for nothing. I once seemed to have perceived in an American boy a greater readiness of sympathy for lands that are great, and rich, and growing, like his own. It proved to be quite otherwise: a mere dumb piece of boyish romance, that I had lacked penetration to divine. But the error serves the purpose of my argument; for I am sure, at least, that the heart of young Scotland will be always touched more nearly by paucity of number and Spartan poverty of life.

So we may argue, and yet the difference is not explained. That Shorter Catechism which I took as being so typical of Scotland, was yet composed in the city of Westminster. The division of races is more sharply marked within the borders of Scotland itself than between the countries. Galloway and Buchan, Lothian and Lochaber, are like foreign parts; yet you may choose a man from any of them, and, ten to one, he shall prove to have the headmark of a Scot. A century and a half ago the Highlander wore a different costume, spoke a different language, worshipped in another church, held different morals, and obeyed a different social constitution from his fellow-countrymen either of the South or North. Even the English, it is recorded, did not loathe the Highlander and the Highland costume as they were loathed by the remainder of the Scotch. Yet the Highlander felt himself a Scot. He would willingly raid into the Scotch lowlands; but his courage failed him at the border, and he regarded England as a perilous, unhomely land. When the Black Watch, after years of foreign service, returned to Scotland, veterans leaped out and kissed the earth at Port Patrick. They had been in Ireland, stationed among men of their own race and language, where they were well liked and treated with affection; but it was the soil of Galloway that they kissed at the extreme end of the hostile lowlands, among a people who did not understand their speech, and who had hated, harried, and hanged them since the dawn of history. Last, and perhaps most curious, the sons of chieftans were often educated on the continent of Europe. They went abroad speaking Gaelic; they returned speaking, not English, but the broad dialect of Scotland. Now, what idea had they in their minds when they thus, in thought, identified themselves with their ancestral enemies? What was the sense in which they were Scotch and not English, or Scotch and not Irish? Can a bare name be thus influential on the minds and affections of men, and a political aggregation blind them to the nature of facts? The story of the Austrian Empire would seem to answer, No; the far more galling business of Ireland clenches the negative from nearer home. Is it common education, common morals, a common language, or a common faith, that joins men into nations? There were practically none of these in the case we are considering.

The fact remains: in spite of the difference of blood and language, the Lowlander feels himself the sentimental countryman of the Highlander. When they meet abroad, they fall upon each other's necks in spirit; even at home there is a kind of clannish intimacy in their talk. But from his

compatriot in the South the Lowlander stands consciously apart. He has had a different training; he obeys different laws; he makes his will in other terms, is otherwise divorced and married; his eyes are not at home in an English landscape or with English houses; his ear continues to remark the English speech; and even though his tongue acquire the Southern knack, he will still have a strong Scotch accent of the mind.

(1882)

FRANÇOIS VILLON, STUDENT, POET, AND HOUSEBREAKER

Perhaps one of the most curious revolutions in literary history is the sudden bull's-eye light cast by M. Longnon on the obscure existence of François Villon.[1] His book is not remarkable merely as a chapter of biography exhumed after four centuries. To readers of the poet it will recall, with a flavor of satire, that characteristic passage in which he bequeaths his spectacles — with a humorous reservation of the case — to the hospital for blind paupers known as the Fifteen-Score. Thus equipped, let the blind paupers go and separate the good from the bad in the cemetery of the Innocents! For his own part the poet can see no distinction. Much have the dead people made of their advantages. What does it matter now that they have lain in state beds and nourished portly bodies upon cakes and cream! Here they all lie, to be trodden in the mud; the large estate and the small, sounding virtue and adroit or powerful vice, in very much the same condition; and a bishop not to be distinguished from a lamplighter with even the strongest spectacles.

Such was Villon's cynical philosophy. Four hundred years after his death, when surely all danger might be considered at an end, a pair of critical spectacles have been applied to his own remains; and though he left behind him a sufficiently ragged reputation from the first, it is only after these four hundred years that his delinquencies have been finally tracked home, and we can assign him to his proper place among the good or wicked. It is a staggering thought, and one that affords a fine figure of the imperishability of men's acts, that the stealth of the private inquiry office can be carried so far back into the dead and dusty past. We are not so soon quit of our concerns as Villon fancied. In the extreme of dissolution, when not so much as a man's name is remembered, when his dust is scattered to the four winds, and perhaps the very grave and the very graveyard where he was laid to rest have been forgotten, desecrated, and buried under populous towns,— even in this extreme let an antiquary fall across a sheet of manuscript, and the name will be recalled, the old infamy will pop out into daylight like a toad out of a fissure in the rock, and the shadow of the shade of what was once a man will be heartily pilloried by his descendants. A little while ago and Villon was almost totally forgotten; then he was revived for the sake of his verses; and now he is being revived with a vengeance in the detection of his misdemeanors. How unsubstantial is this projection of a man's existence, which can lie in abeyance for centuries and then be brushed up again and set forth for the consideration of posterity by a few dips in an antiquary's inkpot! This precarious tenure of fame goes a long way to justify those (and they are not few) who prefer cakes and cream in the immediate present.

A WILD YOUTH.

François de Montcorbier, *alias* François des Loges, *alias* François Villon, *alias* Michel Mouton, Master of Arts in the University of Paris, was born in that city in the summer of 1431. It was a memorable year for France on other and higher considerations. A great-hearted girl and a poor-hearted boy made, the one her last, the other his first appearance on the public stage of that unhappy country. On the 30th of May the ashes of Joan of Arc were thrown into the Seine, and on the 2d of December, our Henry Sixth made his joyous entry dismally enough into disaffected and depopulating Paris. Sword and fire still ravaged the open country. On a single April Saturday twelve hundred persons, besides children, made their escape out of the starving capital. The hangman, as is not

[1] *Etude Biographique sur François Villon.* Paris: H. Menu

uninteresting to note in connection with Master Francis, was kept hard at work in 1431; on the last of April and on the 4th of May alone, sixty-two bandits swung from Paris gibbets.[1] A more confused or troublous time it would have been difficult to select for a start in life. Not even a man's nationality was certain; for the people of Paris there was no such thing as a Frenchman. The English were the English, indeed, but the French were only the Armagnacs, whom, with Joan of Arc at their head, they had beaten back from under their ramparts not two years before. Such public sentiment as they had centered about their dear Duke of Burgundy, and the dear Duke had no more urgent business than to keep out of their neighborhood. . . . At least, and whether he liked it or not, our disreputable troubadour was tubbed and swaddled as a subject of the English crown.

We hear nothing of Villon's father except that he was poor and of mean extraction. His mother was given piously, which does not imply very much in an old Frenchwoman, and quite uneducated. He had an uncle, a monk in an abbey at Angers, who must have prospered beyond the family average, and was reported to be worth five or six hundred crowns. Of this uncle and his money-box the reader will hear once more. In 1448 Francis became a student of the University of Paris; in 1450 he took the degree of Bachelor, and in 1452 that of Master of Arts. His *bourse,* or the sum paid weekly for his board, was of the amount of two sous. Now two sous was about the price of a pound of salt butter in the bad times of 1417; it was the price of half-a-pound in the worse times of 1419; and in 1444, just four years before Villon joined the University, it seems to have been taken as the average wage for a day's manual labor.[2] In short, it cannot have been a very profuse allowance to keep a sharp-set lad in breakfast and supper for seven mortal days; and Villon's share of the cakes and pastry and general good cheer, to which he is never weary of referring, must have been slender from the first.

The educational arrangements of the University of Paris were, to our way of thinking, somewhat incomplete. Worldly and monkish elements were presented in a curious confusion, which the youth might disentangle for himself. If he had an opportunity, on the one hand, of acquiring much hair-drawn divinity and a taste for formal disputation, he was put in the way of much gross and flaunting vice upon the other. The lecture room of a scholastic doctor was sometimes under the same roof with establishments of a very different and peculiarly unedifying order. The students had extraordinary privileges, which by all accounts they abused extraordinarily. And while some condemned themselves to an almost sepulchral regularity and seclusion, others fled the schools, swaggered in the street 'with their thumbs in their girdle,' passed the night in riot, and behaved themselves as the worthy forerunners of Jehan Frollo in the romance of *Notre Dame de Paris.* Villon tells us himself that he was among the truants, but we hardly needed his avowal. The burlesque erudition in which he sometimes indulged implies no more than the merest smattering of knowledge; whereas his acquaintance with blackguard haunts and industries could only have been acquired by early and consistent impiety and idleness. He passed his degrees, it is true; but some of us who have been to modern universities will make their own reflections on the value of the test. As for his three pupils, Colin Laurent, Girard Gossouyn, and Jehan Marceau — if they were really his pupils in any serious sense — what can we say but God help them! And sure enough, by his own description, they turned out as ragged, rowdy, and ignorant as was to be looked for from the views and manners of their rare preceptor.

At some time or other, before or during his university career, the poet was adopted by Master Guillaume de Villon, chaplain of Saint Benoît-le-Bétourné near the Sorbonne. From him he borrowed the surname by which he is known to posterity. It was most likely from his house, called the *Porte Rouge,* and situated in a garden in the cloister of Saint Benoît, that Master Francis heard the bell of the Sorbonne ring out the Angelus while he was finishing his *Small Testa-*

[1] *Bourgeois de Paris,* ed Panthéon, pp. 688, 689.
[2] *Bourgeois,* pp. 627, 636, and 725.

ment at Christmastide in 1456. Toward this benefactor he usually gets credit for a respectable display of gratitude. But with his trap and pitfall style of writing, it is easy to make too sure. His sentiments are about as much to be relied on as those of a professional beggar; and in this, as in so many other matters, he comes toward us whining and piping the eye, and goes off again with a whoop and his finger to his nose. Thus, he calls Guillaume de Villon his 'more than father,' thanks him with a great show of sincerity for having helped him out of many scrapes, and bequeaths him his portion of renown. But the portion of renown which belonged to a young thief, distinguished (if, at the period when he wrote this legacy, he was distinguished at all) for having written some more or less obscene and scurrilous ballads, must have been little fitted to gratify the self-respect or increase the reputation of a benevolent ecclesiastic. The same remark applies to a subsequent legacy of the poet's library, with specification of one work which was plainly neither decent nor devout. We are thus left on the horns of a dilemma. If the chaplain was a godly, philanthropic personage, who had tried to graft good principles and good behavior on this wild slip of an adopted son, these jesting legacies would obviously cut him to the heart. The position of an adopted son toward his adoptive father is one full of delicacy; where a man lends his name he looks for great consideration. And this legacy of Villon's portion of renown may be taken as the mere fling of an unregenerate scapegrace who has wit enough to recognize in his own shame the readiest weapon of offense against a prosy benefactor's feelings. The gratitude of Master Francis figures, on this reading, as a frightful *minus* quality. If, on the other hand, those jests were given and taken in good humor, the whole relation between the pair degenerates into the unedifying complicity of a debauched old chaplain and a witty and dissolute young scholar. At this rate the house with the red door may have rung with the most mundane minstrelsy; and it may have been below its roof that Villon, through a hole in the plaster, studied, as he tells us, the leisures of a rich ecclesiastic.

It was, perhaps, of some moment in the poet's life that he should have inhabited the cloister of Saint Benoît. Three of the most remarkable among his early acquaintances are Catherine de Vauselles, for whom he entertained a short-lived affection and an enduring and most unmanly resentment; Regnier de Montigny, a young blackguard of good birth; and Colin de Cayeux, a fellow with a marked aptitude for picking locks. Now we are on a foundation of mere conjecture, but it is at least curious to find that two of the canons of Saint Benoît answered respectively to the names of Pierre de Vaucel and Etienne de Montigny, and that there was a householder called Nicolas de Cayeux in a street — the Rue des Poirées — in the immediate neighborhood of the cloister. M. Longnon is almost ready to identify Catherine as the niece of Pierre; Regnier as the nephew of Etienne, and Colin as the son of Nicolas. Without going so far, it must be owned that the approximation of names is significant. As we go on to see the part played by each of these persons in the sordid melodrama of the poet's life, we shall come to regard it as even more notable. Is it not Clough who has remarked that, after all, everything lies in juxtaposition? Many a man's destiny has been settled by nothing apparently more grave than a pretty face on the opposite side of the street and a couple of bad companions round the corner.

Catherine de Vauselles (or de Vaucel — the change is within the limits of Villon's license) had plainly delighted in the poet's conversation; near neighbors or not, they were much together; and Villon made no secret of his court, and suffered himself to believe that his feeling was repaid in kind. This may have been an error from the first, or he may have estranged her by subsequent misconduct or temerity. One can easily imagine Villon an impatient wooer. One thing, at least, is sure: that the affair terminated in a manner bitterly humiliating to Master Francis. In presence of his lady-love, perhaps under her window and certainly with her connivance, he was unmercifully thrashed by one Noë le Joly — beaten, as

he says himself, like dirty linen on the washing-board. It is characteristic that his malice had notably increased between the time when he wrote the *Small Testament* immediately on the back of the occurrence, and the time when he wrote the *Large Testament* five years after. On the latter occasion nothing is too bad for his 'damsel with the twisted nose,' as he calls her. She is spared neither hint nor accusation, and he tells his messenger to accost her with the vilest insults. Villon, it is thought, was out of Paris when these amenities escaped his pen; or perhaps the strong arm of Noë le Joly would have been again in requisition. So ends the love story, if love story it may properly be called. Poets are not necessarily fortunate in love; but they usually fall among more romantic circumstances and bear their disappointment with a better grace.

The neighborhood of Regnier de Montigny and Colin de Cayeux was probably more influential on his after life than the contempt of Catherine. For a man who is greedy of all pleasures, and provided with little money and less dignity of character, we may prophesy a safe and speedy voyage downward. Humble or even truckling virtue may walk unspotted in this life. But only those who despise the pleasures can afford to despise the opinion of the world. A man of a strong, heady temperament, like Villon, is very differently tempted. His eyes lay hold on all provocations greedily, and his heart flames up at a look into imperious desire; he is snared and broached to by anything and everything, from a pretty face to a piece of pastry in a cook-shop window; he will drink the rinsing of the wine cup, stay the latest at the tavern party; tap at the lit windows, follow the sound of singing, and beat the whole neighborhood for another reveler, as he goes reluctantly homeward; and grudge himself every hour of sleep as a black empty period in which he cannot follow after pleasure. Such a person is lost if he have not dignity, or, failing that, at least pride, which is its shadow and in many ways its substitute. Master Francis, I fancy, would follow his own eager instincts without much spiritual struggle. And we soon find him fallen among thieves in sober, literal earnest, and counting as acquaintances the most disreputable people he could lay his hands on: fellows who stole ducks in Paris Moat; sergeants of the criminal court, and archers of the watch; blackguards who slept at night under the butchers' stalls, and for whom the aforesaid archers peered about carefully with lanterns; Regnier de Montigny, Colin de Cayeux, and their crew, all bound on a favoring breeze toward the gallows; the disorderly abbess of Port Royal, who went about at fair time with soldiers and thieves, and conducted her abbey on the queerest principles; and most likely Perette Mauger, the great Paris receiver of stolen goods, not yet dreaming, poor woman! of the last scene of her career when Henry Cousin, executor of the high justice, shall bury her, alive and most reluctant, in front of the new Montigny gibbet.[1] Nay, our friend soon began to take a foremost rank in this society. He could string off verses, which is always an agreeable talent; and he could make himself useful in many other ways. The whole ragged army of Bohemia, and whosoever loved good cheer without at all loving to work and pay for it, are addressed in contemporary verses as the 'Subjects of François Villon.' He was a good genius to all hungry and unscrupulous persons; and became the hero of a whole legendary cycle of tavern tricks and cheateries. At best, these were doubtful levities, rather too thievish for a schoolboy, rather too gamesome for a thief. But he would not linger long in this equivocal border land. He must soon have complied with his surroundings. He was one who would go where the cannikin clinked, not caring who should pay; and from supping in the wolves' den, there is but a step to hunting with the pack. And here, as I am on the chapter of his degradation, I shall say all I mean to say about its darkest expression, and be done with it for good. Some charitable critics see no more than a *jeu d'esprit*, a graceful and trifling exercise of the imagination, in the grimy ballad of Fat Peg (*Grosse Margot*). I am not able to follow these gentlemen to this polite extreme. Out of all Villon's works that ballad stands forth in flaring reality, gross and ghastly, as a thing written in a contraction of

[1] *Chronique Scandaleuse*, ed. Panthéon, p. 237.

disgust. M. Longnon shows us more and more clearly at every page that we are to read our poet literally, that his names are the names of real persons, and the events he chronicles were actual events. But even if the tendency of criticism had run the other way, this ballad would have gone far to prove itself. I can well understand the reluctance of worthy persons in this matter; for of course it is unpleasant to think of a man of genius as one who held, in the words of Marina to Boult —

> A place, for which the pained'st fiend
> Of hell would not in reputation change.

But beyond this natural unwillingness, the whole difficulty of the case springs from a highly virtuous ignorance of life. Paris now is not so different from the Paris of then; and the whole of the doings of Bohemia are not written in the sugar-candy pastorals of Murger. It is really not at all surprising that a young man of the fifteenth century, with a knack of making verses, should accept his bread upon disgraceful terms. The race of those who do is not extinct; and some of them to this day write the prettiest verses imaginable. . . . After this, it were impossible for Master Francis to fall lower: to go and steal for himself would be an admirable advance from every point of view, divine or human.

And yet it is not as a thief, but as a homicide, that he makes his first appearance before angry justice. On June 5, 1455, when he was about twenty-four, and had been Master of Arts for a matter of three years, we behold him for the first time quite definitely. Angry justice had as it were, photographed him in the act of his homicide; and M. Longnon, rummaging among old deeds, has turned up the negative and printed it off for our instruction. Villon had been supping — copiously we may believe — and sat on a stone bench in front of the Church of St. Benoît, in company with a priest called Gilles and a woman of the name of Isabeau. It was nine o'clock, a mighty late hour for the period, and evidently a fine summer's night. Master Francis carried a mantle, like a prudent man, to keep him from the dews *(serain)*, and had a sword below it dangling from his girdle. So these three dallied in front of St. Benoît, taking their pleasure *(pour soy esbatre)*. Suddenly there arrived upon the scene a priest, Philippe Chermoye or Sermaise, also with sword and cloak, and accompanied by one Master Jehan le Mardi. Sermaise, according to Villon's account, which is all we have to go upon, came up blustering and denying God; as Villon rose to make room for him upon the bench, thrust him rudely back into his place; and finally drew his sword and cut open his lower lip, by what I should imagine was a very clumsy stroke. Up to this point, Villon professes to have been a model of courtesy, even of feebleness; and the brawl in his version, reads like the fable of the wolf and the lamb. But now the lamb was roused; he drew his sword, stabbed Sermaise in the groin, knocked him on the head with a big stone, and then, leaving him to his fate, went away to have his own lip doctored by a barber of the name of Fouquet. In one version, he says that Gilles, Isabeau, and Le Mardi ran away at the first high words, and that he and Sermaise had it out alone; in another, Le Mardi is represented as returning and wresting Villon's sword from him: the reader may please himself. Sermaise was picked up, lay all that night in the prison of Saint Benoît, where he was examined by an official of the Châtelet and expressly pardoned Villon, and died on the following Saturday in the Hôtel Dieu.

This, as I have said, was in June. Not before January of the next year could Villon extract a pardon from the king; but while his hand was in, he got two. One is for 'François des Loges, alias *(autrement dit)* de Villon'; and the other runs in the name of François de Montcorbier. Nay, it appears there was a further complication; for in the narrative of the first of these documents, it is mentioned that he passed himself off upon Fouquet, the barber-surgeon, as one Michel Mouton. M. Longnon has a theory that this unhappy accident with Sermaise was the cause of Villon's subsequent irregularities; and that up to that moment he had been the pink of good behavior. But the matter has to my eyes a more dubious air. A pardon necessary for Des Loges and another for Montcorbier? and these two the same person? and one or both

of them known by the *alias* of Villon, however honestly come by? and lastly, in the heat of the moment, a fourth name thrown out with an assured countenance? A ship is not to be trusted that sails under so many colors. This is not the simple bearing of innocence. No — the young master was already treading crooked paths; already, he would start and blench at a hand upon his shoulder, with the look we know so well in the face of Hogarth's Idle Apprentice; already, in the blue devils, he would see Henry Cousin, the executor of high justice, going in dolorous procession toward Montfaucon, and hear the wind and the birds crying around Paris gibbet.

A Gang of Thieves

In spite of the prodigious number of people who managed to get hanged, the fifteenth century was by no means a bad time for criminals. A great confusion of parties and great dust of fighting favored the escape of private housebreakers and quiet fellows who stole ducks in Paris Moat. Prisons were leaky; and as we shall see, a man with a few crowns in his pocket and perhaps some acquaintance among the officials, could easily slip out and become once more a free marauder. There was no want of a sanctuary where he might harbor until troubles blew by; and accomplices helped each other with more or less good faith. Clerks, above all, had remarkable facilities for a criminal way of life; for they were privileged, except in cases of notorious incorrigibility, to be plucked from the hands of rude secular justice and tried by a tribunal of their own. In 1402, a couple of thieves, both clerks of the University, were condemned to death by the Provost of Paris. As they were taken to Montfaucon, they kept crying 'high and clearly' for their benefit of clergy, but were none the less pitilessly hanged and gibbeted. Indignant Alma Mater interfered before the king; and the Provost was deprived of all royal offices, and condemned to return the bodies and erect a great stone cross, on the road from Paris to the gibbet, graven with the effigies of these two holy martyrs.[1] We shall hear more of the benefit of clergy; for after this the reader will not be surprised to meet with thieves in the shape of tonsured clerks, or even priests and monks.

To a knot of such learned pilferers our poet certainly belonged; and by turning over a few more of M. Longnon's negatives, we shall get a clear idea of their character and doings. Montigny and De Cayeux are names already known; Guy Tabary, Petit-Jehan, Dom Nicolas, little Thibault, who was both clerk and goldsmith, and who made picklocks and melted plate for himself and his companions — with these the reader has still to become acquainted. Petit-Jehan and De Cayeux were handy fellows and enjoyed a useful preëminence in honor of their doings with the picklock. '*Dictus des Cahyeus est fortis operator crochetorum* [the said De Cayeux is an able manipulator of picklocks],' says Tabary's interrogation, '*sed dictus Petit-Jehan, ejus socius, est forcius operator* [but the said Petit-Jehan, his companion, is a more able manipulator].' But the flower of the flock was little Thibault; it was reported that no lock could stand before him: he had a persuasive hand; let us salute capacity wherever we may find it. Perhaps the term *gang* is not quite properly applied to the persons whose fortunes we are now about to follow; rather they were independent malefactors, socially intimate, and occasionally joining together for some serious operation, just as modern stock-jobbers form a syndicate for an important loan. Nor were they at all particular to any branch of misdoing. They did not scrupulously confine themselves to a single sort of theft, as I hear is common among modern thieves. They were ready for anything, from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter. Montigny, for instance, had neglected neither of these extremes, and we find him accused of cheating at games of hazard on the one hand, and on the other of the murder of one Thevenin Pensete in a house by the Cemetery of St. John. If time had only spared us some particulars, might not this last have furnished us with the matter of a grisly winter's tale?

At Christmas-time in 1456, readers of Villon will remember that he was engaged on the *Small Testament*. About the same period, *circa festum nativitatis Domini* [about the feast of the birth

[1] Monstrelet: *Panthéon Littéraire*, p. 26.

of Our Lord], he took part in a memorable supper at the Mule Tavern, in front of the church of St. Mathurin. Tabary, who seems to have been very much Villon's creature, had ordered the supper in the course of the afternoon. He was a man who had had troubles in his time and languished in the Bishop of Paris's prisons on a suspicion of picking locks; confiding, convivial, not very astute — who had copied out a whole improper romance with his own right hand. This supper-party was to be his first introduction to De Cayeux and Petit-Jehan, which was probably a matter of some concern to the poor man's muddy wits; in the sequel, at least, he speaks of both with an undisguised respect, based on professional inferiority in the matter of picklocks. Dom Nicolas, a Picardy monk, was the fifth and last at table. When supper had been despatched and fairly washed down, we may suppose, with white Baigneux or red Beaune, which were favorite wines among the fellowship, Tabary was solemnly sworn over to secrecy on the night's performances; and the party left the Mule and proceeded to an unoccupied house belonging to Robert de Saint-Simon. This, over a low wall, they entered without difficulty. All but Tabary took off their upper garments; a ladder was found and applied to the high wall which separated Saint-Simon's house from the court of the College of Navarre; the four fellows in their shirtsleeves (as we might say) clambered over in a twinkling; and Master Guy Tabary remained alone beside the overcoats. From the court the burglars made their way into the vestry of the chapel, where they found a large chest, strengthened with iron bands and closed with four locks. One of these locks they picked, and then, by levering up the corner, forced the other three. Inside was a small coffer, of walnut wood, also barred with iron, but fastened with only three locks, which were all comfortably picked by way of the keyhole. In the walnut coffer — a joyous sight by our thieves' lantern — were five hundred crowns of gold. There was some talk of opening the aumries, where, if they had only known, a booty eight or nine times greater lay ready to their hand; but one of the party (I have a humorous suspicion it was Dom Nicolas, the Picardy monk) hurried them away. It was ten o'clock when they mounted the ladder; it was about midnight before Tabary beheld them coming back. To him they gave ten crowns, and promised a share of a two-crown dinner on the morrow; whereat we may suppose his mouth watered. In course of time, he got wind of the real amount of their booty and understood how scurvily he had been used; but he seems to have borne no malice. How could he, against such superb operators as Petit-Jehan and De Cayeux; or a person like Villon, who could have made a new improper romance out of his own head, instead of merely copying an old one with mechanical right hand?

The rest of the winter was not uneventful for the gang. First they made a demonstration against the Church of St. Mathurin after chalices, and were ignominiously chased away by barking dogs. Then Tabary fell out with Casin Chollet, one of the fellows who stole ducks in Paris Moat, who subsequently became a sergeant of the Châtelet and distinguished himself by misconduct, followed by imprisonment and public castigation, during the wars of Louis Eleventh. The quarrel was not conducted with a proper regard to the king's peace, and the pair publicly belabored each other until the police stepped in, and Master Tabary was cast once more into the prisons of the Bishop. While he still lay in durance, another job was cleverly executed by the band in broad daylight, at the Augustine Monastery. Brother Guillaume Coiffier was beguiled by an accomplice to St. Mathurin to say mass; and during his absence, his chamber was entered and five or six hundred crowns in money and some silver-plate successfully abstracted. A melancholy man was Coiffier on his return! Eight crowns from this adventure were forwarded by little Thibault to the incarcerated Tabary; and with these he bribed the jailer and reappeared in Paris taverns. Some time before or shortly after this, Villon set out for Angers, as he had promised in the *Small Testament*. The object of this excursion was not merely to avoid the presence of his cruel mistress or the strong arm of Noë le Joly,

but to plan a deliberate robbery on his uncle the monk. As soon as he had properly studied the ground, the others were to go over in force from Paris — picklocks and all — and away with my uncle's strongbox! This throws a comical sidelight on his own accusation against his relatives, that they had 'forgotten natural duty' and disowned him because he was poor. A poor relation is a distasteful circumstance at the best, but a poor relation who plans deliberate robberies against those of his blood, and trudges hundreds of weary leagues to put them into execution, is surely a little on the wrong side of toleration. The uncle at Angers may have been monstrously undutiful; but the nephew from Paris was upsides with him.

On the 23d April, that venerable and discreet person, Master Pierre Marchand, Curate and Prior of Paray-le-Monial, in the diocese of Chartres, arrived in Paris and put up at the sign of the Three Chandeliers, in the Rue de la Huchette. Next day, or the day after, as he was breakfasting at the sign of the Armchair, he fell into talk with two customers, one of whom was a priest and the other our friend Tabary. The idiotic Tabary became mighty confidential as to his past life. Pierre Marchand, who was an acquaintance of Guillaume Coiffier's and had sympathized with him over his loss, pricked up his ears at the mention of picklocks, and led on the transcriber of improper romances from one thing to another, until they were fast friends. For picklocks the Prior of Paray professed a keen curiosity; but Tabary, upon some late alarm, had thrown all his into the Seine. Let that be no difficulty, however, for was there not little Thibault, who could make them of all shapes and sizes, and to whom Tabary, smelling an accomplice, would be only too glad to introduce his new acquaintance? On the morrow, accordingly, they met; and Tabary, after having first wet his whistle at the Prior's expense, led him to Notre Dame and presented him to four or five 'young companions,' who were keeping sanctuary in the church. They were all clerks, recently escaped, like Tabary himself, from the episcopal prisons. Among these we may notice Thibault, the operator, a little fellow of twenty-six, wearing long hair behind. The prior expressed, through Tabary, his anxiety to become their accomplice and altogether such as they were *(de leur sorte et le leurs complices)*. Mighty polite they showed themselves, and made him many fine speeches in return. But for all that, perhaps because they had longer heads than Tabary, perhaps because it is less easy to wheedle men in a body, they kept obstinately to generalities and gave him no information as to their exploits, past, present, or to come. I suppose Tabary groaned under this reserve; for no sooner were he and the Prior out of the church than he fairly emptied his heart to him, gave him full details of many hanging matters in the past, and explained the future intentions of the band. The scheme of the hour was to rob another Augustine monk, Robert de la Porte, and in this the Prior agreed to take a hand with simulated greed. Thus, in the course of two days, he had turned this wineskin of a Tabary inside out. For a while longer the farce was carried on; the Prior was introduced to Petit-Jehan, whom he describes as a little, very smart man of thirty, with a black beard and a short jacket; an appointment was made and broken in the de la Porte affair; Tabary had some breakfast at the Prior's charge and leaked out more secrets under the influence of wine and friendship; and then all of a sudden, on the 17th of May, an alarm sprang up, the Prior picked up his skirts and walked quietly over to the Châtelet to make a deposition, and the whole band took to their heels and vanished out of Paris and the sight of the police.

Vanish as they like, they all go with a clog about their feet. Sooner or later, here or there, they will be caught in the fact, and ignominiously sent home. From our vantage of four centuries afterward, it is odd and pitiful to watch the order in which the fugitives are captured and dragged in.

Montigny was the first. In August of that same year, he was laid by the heels on many grievous counts; sacrilegious robberies, frauds, incorrigibility, and that bad business about Thevenin Pensete in the house by the Cemetery of St. John. He was reclaimed by the ecclesiastical authorities as a clerk; but the claim was

rebutted on the score of incorrigibility, and ultimately fell to the ground; and he was condemned to death by the Provost of Paris. It was a very rude hour for Montigny, but hope was not yet over. He was a fellow of some birth; his father had been king's pantler; his sister, probably married to some one about the Court, was in the family way, and her health would be endangered if the execution was proceeded with. So down comes Charles the Seventh with letters of mercy, commuting the penalty to a year in a dungeon on bread and water, and a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James in Galicia. Alas! the document was incomplete; it did not contain the full tale of Montigny's enormities; it did not recite that he had been denied benefit of clergy, and it said nothing about Thevenin Pensete. Montigny's hour was at hand. Benefit of clergy, honorable descent from king's pantler, sister in the family way, royal letters of commutation — all were of no avail. He had been in prison in Rouen, in Tours, in Bordeaux, and four times already in Paris; and out of all these he had come scathless; but now he must make a little excursion as far as Montfaucon with Henry Cousin, executor of high justice. There let him swing among the carrion crows.

About a year later, in July, 1458, the police laid hands on Tabary. Before the ecclesiastical commissary he was twice examined, and, on the latter occasion, put to the question ordinary and extraordinary. What a dismal change from pleasant suppers at the Mule, where he sat in triumph with expert operators and great wits! He is at the lees of life, poor rogue; and those fingers which once transcribed improper romances are now agonizingly stretched upon the rack. We have no sure knowledge, but we may have a shrewd guess of the conclusion. Tabary, the admirer, would go the same way as those whom he admired.

The last we hear of is Colin de Cayeux. He was caught in autumn 1460, in the great Church of St. Leu d'Esserens, which makes so fine a figure in the pleasant Oise valley between Creil and Beaumont. He was reclaimed by no less than two bishops; but the Procureur for the Provost held fast by incorrigible Colin. 1460 was an ill-starred year: for justice was making a clean sweep of 'poor and indigent persons, thieves, cheats, and lockpickers,' in the neighborhood of Paris;[1] and Colin de Cayeux, with many others, was condemned to death and hanged.[2]

Villon and the Gallows

Villon was still absent on the Angers expedition when the Prior of Paray sent such a bombshell among his accomplices; and the dates of his return and arrest remain undiscoverable. M. Campaux plausibly enough opined for the autumn of 1457, which would make him closely follow on Montigny, and the first of those denounced by the Prior to fall into the toils. We may suppose, at least, that it was not long thereafter; we may suppose him competed for between lay and clerical Courts; and we may suppose him alternately pert and impudent, humble and fawning, in his defense. But at the end of all supposing, we come upon some nuggets of fact. For first, he was put to the question by water. He who had tossed off so many cups of white Baigneux or red Beaune, now drank water through linen folds, until his bowels were flooded and his heart stood still. After so much raising of the elbow, so much outcry of fictitious thirst, here at last was enough drinking for a lifetime. Truly, of our pleasant vices, the gods make whips to scourge us. And secondly he was condemned to be hanged. A man may have been expecting a catastrophe for years, and yet find himself unprepared when it arrives. Certainly, Villon found, in this legitimate issue of his career, a very staggering and grave consideration. Every beast, as he says, clings bitterly to a whole skin. If everything is lost, and even honor, life still remains; nay, and it becomes, like the ewe lamb in Nathan's parable, as dear as all the rest. 'Do you fancy,' he asks, in a lively ballad, 'that I had not enough

[1] *Chron. Scand.* ut supra.

[2] Here and there, principally in the order of events, this article differs from M. Longnon's own reading of his material. The ground on which he defers the execution of Montigny and De Cayeux beyond the date of their trials seems insufficient. There is a law of parsimony for the construction of historical documents; simplicity is the first duty of narration; and hanged they were.

philosophy under my hood to cry out: I appeal? If I had made any bones about the matter, I should have been planted upright in the fields, by the St. Denis Road'— Montfaucon being on the way to St. Denis. An appeal to Parliament, as we saw in the case of Colin de Cayeux, did not necessarily lead to an acquittal or a commutation; and while the matter was pending, our poet had ample opportunity to reflect on his position. Hanging is a sharp argument, and to swing with many others on the gibbet adds a horrible corollary for the imagination. With the aspect of Montfaucon he was well acquainted; indeed, as the neighborhood appears to have been sacred to junketing and nocturnal picnics of wild young men and women, he had probably studied it under all varieties of hour and weather. And now, as he lay in prison waiting the mortal push, these different aspects crowded back on his imagination with a new and startling significance; and he wrote a ballad, by way of epitaph for himself and his companions, which remains unique in the annals of mankind. It is, in the highest sense, a piece of his biography:—

La pluye nous a debuez et lavez,
Et le soleil dessechez et noirciz;
Pies, corbeaulx, nous ont les yeux cavez,
Et arrachez la barbe et les sourcilz.
Jamais, nul temps, nous ne sommes rassis;
Puis çà, puis là, comme le vent varie,
A son plaisir sans cesser nous charie,
Plus becquetez d' oiseaulx que dez à couldre.
Ne soyez donc de nostre confrairie,
Mais priez Dieu que tous nous vueille absouldre.

[The rain has soaked us and washed us, and the sun has dried us and tanned us; magpies and crows have pecked out our eyes, and snatched away our beards and eye-brows. Never, never are we at rest! Now here, now there, as the wind shifts, it carries us along at its pleasure, ceaselessly, more pecked by birds than thimbles for sewing. Do not join, then, our band, but pray God that he may be willing to absolve us.]

Here is some genuine thieves' literature after so much that was spurious; sharp as an etching, written with a shuddering soul. There is an intensity of consideration in the piece that shows it to be the transcript of familiar thoughts. It is the quintessence of many a doleful nightmare on the straw, when he felt himself swing helpless in the wind, and saw the birds turn about him, screaming and menacing his eyes.

And, after all, the Parliament changed his sentence into one of banishment; and to Roussillon, in Dauphiny, our poet must carry his woes without delay. Travelers between Lyons and Marseilles may remember a station on the line, some way below Vienne, where the Rhone fleets seaward between vine-clad hills. This was Villon's Siberia. It would be a little warm in summer, perhaps, and a little cold in winter in that draughty valley between two great mountain fields; but what with the hills, and the racing river, and the fiery Rhone wines, he was little to be pitied on the conditions of his exile. Villon, in a remarkably bad ballad, written in a breath, heartily thanked and fulsomely belauded the Parliament; the *envoi*, like the proverbial postscript of a lady's letter, containing the pith of his performance in a request for three days' delay to settle his affairs and bid his friends farewell. He was probably not followed out of Paris, like Antoine Fradin, the popular preacher, another exile of a few years later, by weeping multitudes;[1] but I dare say one or two rogues of his acquaintance would keep him company for a mile or so on the south road, and drink a bottle with him before they turned. For banished people, in those days, seem to have set out on their own responsibility, in their own guard, and at their own expense. It was no joke to make one's way from Paris to Roussillon alone and penniless in the fifteenth century. Villon says he left a rag of his tails on every bush. Indeed, he must have had many a weary tramp, many a slender meal, and many a to-do with blustering captains of the Ordonnance. But with one of his light fingers, we may fancy that he took as good as he gave; for every rag of his tail, he would manage to indemnify himself upon the population in the shape of food, or wine, or ringing money; and his route would be traceable across France and

[1] *Chron. Scand.*, p. 338.

Burgundy by housewives and inn-keepers lamenting over petty thefts, like the track of a single human locust. A strange figure he must have cut in the eyes of the good country people: this ragged, blackguard city poet, with a smack of the Paris student, and a smack of the Paris street arab, posting along the highways, in rain or sun, among the green fields and vineyards. For himself, he had no taste for rural loveliness; green fields and vineyards would be mighty indifferent to Master Francis; but he would often have his tongue in his cheek at the simplicity of rustic dupes, and often, at city gates, he might stop to contemplate the gibbet with its swinging bodies, and hug himself on his escape.

How long he stayed at Roussillon, how far he became the protégé of the Bourbons, to whom that town belonged, or when it was that he took part, under the auspices of Charles of Orleans, in a riming tournament to be referred to once again in the pages of the present volume, are matters that still remain in darkness, in spite of M. Longnon's diligent rummaging among archives. When we next find him, in summer 1461, alas! he is once more in durance: this time at Méun-sur-Loire, in the prisons of Thibault d'Aussigny, Bishop of Orleans. He had been lowered in a basket into a noisome pit, where he lay, all summer, gnawing hard crusts and railing upon fate. His teeth, he says, were like the teeth of a rake: a touch of haggard portraiture all the more real for being excessive and burlesque, and all the more proper to the man for being a caricature of his own misery. His eyes were 'bandaged with thick walls.' It might blow hurricanes overhead; the lightning might leap in high heaven; but no word of all this reached him in his noisome pit. '*Il n'entre, ou gist, n'escler ni tourbillon* [Where he lies neither lightning nor whirlwind enters].' Above all, he was fevered with envy and anger at the freedom of others; and his heart flowed over into curses as he thought of Thibault d'Aussigny, walking the streets in God's sunlight, and blessing people with extended fingers. So much we find sharply lined in his own poems. Why he was cast again into prison — how he had again managed to shave the gallows — this we know not, nor, from the destruction of authorities, are we ever likely to learn. But on October 2d, 1461, or some day immediately preceding, the new King, Louis Eleventh, made his joyous entry into Méun. Now it was a part of the formality on such occasions for the new King to liberate certain prisoners; and so the basket was let down into Villon's pit, and hastily did Master Francis scramble in, and was most joyfully hauled up, and shot out, blinking and tottering, but once more a free man, into the blessed sun and wind. Now or never is the time for verses! Such a happy revolution would turn the head of a stocking-weaver, and set him jingling rimes. And so — after a voyage to Paris, where he finds Montigny and De Cayeux clattering their bones upon the gibbet, and his three pupils roystering in Paris streets, 'with their thumbs under their girdles,' — down sits Master Francis to write his *Large Testament,* and perpetuate his name in a sort of glorious ignominy.

The 'Large Testament'

Of this capital achievement and, with it, of Villon's style in general, it is here the place to speak. The *Large Testament* is a hurly-burly of cynical and sentimental reflections about life, jesting legacies to friends and enemies, and, interspersed among these many admirable ballades, both serious and absurd. With so free a design, no thought that occurred to him would need to be dismissed without expression; and he could draw at full length the portrait of his own bedeviled soul, and of the bleak and blackguardly world which was the theater of his exploits and sufferings. If the reader can conceive something between the slapdash inconsequence of Byron's *Don Juan* and the racy humorous gravity and brief noble touches that distinguish the vernacular poems of Burns, he will have formed some idea of Villon's style. To the latter writer — except in the ballades, which are quite his own, and can be paralleled from no other language known to me — he bears a particular resemblance. In common with Burns he has a certain rugged compression, a brutal vivacity of epithet, a homely vigor, a delight in local personalities, and an in-

terest in many sides of life, that are often despised and passed over by more effete and cultured poets. Both also, in their strong, easy, colloquial way, tend to become difficult and obscure; the obscurity in the case of Villon passing at times into the absolute darkness of cant language. They are perhaps the only two great masters of expression who keep sending their readers to a glossary.

'Shall we not dare to say of a thief,' asks Montaigne, 'that he has a handsome leg'? It is a far more serious claim that we have to put forward in behalf of Villon. Beside that of his contemporaries, his writing, so full of color, so eloquent, so picturesque, stands out in an almost miraculous isolation. If only one or two of the chroniclers could have taken a leaf out of his book, history would have been a pastime, and the fifteenth century as present to our minds as the age of Charles Second. This gallows-bird was the one great writer of his age and country, and initiated modern literature for France. Boileau, long ago, in the period of perukes and snuff-boxes, recognized him as the first articulate poet in the language; and if we measure him, not by priority of merit, but living duration of influence; not on a comparison with obscure forerunners, but with great and famous successors, we shall install this ragged and disreputable figure in a far higher niche in glory's temple than was ever dreamed of by the critic. It is, in itself, a memorable fact that, before 1542, in the very dawn of printing, and while modern France was in the making, the works of Villon ran through seven different editions. Out of him flows much of Rabelais; and through Rabelais, directly and indirectly, a deep, permanent, and growing inspiration. Not only his style, but his callous pertinent way of looking upon the sordid and ugly sides of life, becomes every day a more specific feature in the literature of France. And only the other year, a work of some power appeared in Paris, and appeared with infinite scandal, which owed its whole inner significance and much of its outward form to the study of our riming thief.

The world to which he introduces us is, as before said, blackguardly and bleak. Paris swarms before us, full of famine, shame, and death; monks and the servants of great lords hold high wassail upon cakes and pastry; the poor man licks his lips before the baker's window; people with patched eyes sprawl all night under the stall; chuckling Tabary transcribes an improper romance; bare-bosomed lasses and ruffling students swagger into the streets; the drunkard goes stumbling homeward; the graveyard is full of bones; and away on Montfaucon, Colin de Cayeux and Montigny hang draggled in the rain. Is there nothing better to be seen than sordid misery and worthless joys? Only where the poor old mother of the poet kneels in church below painted windows, and makes tremulous supplication to the Mother of God.

In our mixed world, full of green fields and happy lovers, where not long before, Joan of Arc had led one of the highest and noblest lives in the whole story of mankind, this was all worth chronicling that our poet could perceive. His eyes were indeed sealed with his own filth. He dwelt all his life in a pit more noisome than the dungeon at Méun. In the moral world, also, there are large phenomena not cognizable out of holes and corners. Loud winds blow, speeding home deep-laden ships and sweeping rubbish from the earth; the lightning leaps and cleans the face of heaven; high purposes and brave passions shake and sublimate men's spirits; and meanwhile, in the narrow dungeon of his soul, Villon is mumbling crusts and picking vermin.

Along with this deadly gloom of outlook, we must take another characteristic of his work: its unrivaled insincerity. I can give no better similitude of this quality than I have given already: that he comes up with a whine, and runs away with a whoop and his finger to his nose. His pathos is that of a professional mendicant who should happen to be a man of genius; his levity that of a bitter street arab, full of bread. On a first reading, the pathetic passages preoccupy the reader, and he is cheated out of an alms in the shape of sympathy. But when the thing is studied the illusion fades away: in the transitions, above all, we can detect the evil, ironical temper of the man; and instead of a flighty work, where many crude but genuine feelings tumble together for the

mastery as in the lists of tournament, we are tempted to think of the *Large Testament* as of one long-drawn epical grimace, pulled by a merry-andrew, who has found a certain despicable eminence over human respect and human affections by perching himself astride upon the gallows. Between these two views, at best, all temperate judgments will be found to fall; and rather, as I imagine, toward the last.

There were two things on which he felt with perfect and, in one case, even threatening sincerity.

The first of these was an undisguised envy of those richer than himself. He was forever drawing a parallel, already exemplified from his own words, between the happy life of the well-to-do and the miseries of the poor. Burns, too proud and honest not to work, continued through all reverses to sing of poverty with a light, defiant note. Béranger waited till he was himself beyond the reach of want, before writing the *Old Vagabond* or *Jacques*. Samuel Johnson, although he was very sorry to be poor, 'was a great arguer for the advantages of poverty' in his ill days. Thus it is that brave men carry their crosses, and smile with the fox burrowing in their vitals. But Villon, who had not the courage to be poor with honesty, now whiningly implores our sympathy, now shows his teeth upon the dung-heap with an ugly snarl. He envies bitterly, envies passionately. Poverty, he protests, drives men to steal, as hunger makes the wolf sally from the forest. The poor, he goes on, will always have a carping word to say, or, if that outlet be denied, nourish rebellious thoughts. It is a calumny on the noble army of the poor. Thousands in a small way of life, ay, and even in the smallest, go through life with tenfold as much honor and dignity and peace of mind, as the rich gluttons whose dainties and state-beds awakened Villon's covetous temper. And every morning's sun sees thousands who pass whistling to their toil. But Villon was the '*mauvais pauvre*': defined by Victor Hugo, and, in its English expression, so admirably stereotyped by Dickens. He was the first wicked *sans-culotte* [tatterdemalion]. He is the man of genius with the moleskin cap. He is mighty pathetic and beseeching here in the street, but I would not go down a dark road with him for a large consideration.

The second of the points on which he was genuine and emphatic was common to the middle ages; a deep and somewhat sniveling conviction of the transitory nature of this life and the pity and horror of death. Old age and the grave, with some dark and yet half-sceptical terror of an after-world — these were ideas that clung about his bones like a disease. An old ape, as he says, may play all the tricks in its repertory, and none of them will tickle an audience into good humor. *Tousjours vieil synge est desplaisant.* It is not the old jester who receives most recognition at a tavern party, but the young fellow, fresh and handsome, who knows the new slang, and carries off his vice with a certain air. Of this, as a tavern jester himself, he would be pointedly conscious. As for the women with whom he was best acquainted, his reflections on their old age, in all their harrowing pathos, shall remain in the original for me. Horace has disgraced himself to something the same tune; but what Horace throws out with an ill-favored laugh, Villon dwells on with an almost maudlin whimper.

It is in death that he finds his truest inspiration; in the swift and sorrowful change that overtakes beauty; in the strange revolution by which great fortunes and renowns are diminished to a handful of churchyard dust; and in the utter passing away of what was once lovable and mighty. It is in this that the mixed texture of his thought enables him to reach such poignant and terrible effects, and to enhance pity with ridicule, like a man cutting capers to a funeral march. It is in this, also, that he rises out of himself into the higher spheres of art. So, in the ballade by which he is best known, he rings the changes on names that once stood for beautiful and queenly women, and are now no more than letters and a legend. 'Where are the snows of yester year?' runs the burden. And so, in another not so famous, he passes in review the different degrees of bygone men, from the holy Apostles and the golden Emperor of the East, down to the heralds, pursuivants, and trumpeters, who also bore their part in

the world's pageantries and ate greedily at great folks' tables: all this to the refrain of 'So much carry the winds away!' Probably, there was some melancholy in his mind for a yet lower grade, and Montigny and Colin de Cayeux clattering their bones on Paris gibbet. Alas, and with so pitiful an experience of life, Villon can offer us nothing but terror and lamentation about death! No one has ever more skilfully communicated his own disenchantment; no one ever blown a more ear-piercing note of sadness. This unrepentant thief can attain neither to Christian confidence, nor to the spirit of the bright Greek saying, that whom the gods love die early. It is a poor heart, and a poorer age, that cannot accept the conditions of life with some heroic readiness.

. . . . . .

The date of the *Large Testament* is the last date in the poet's biography. After having achieved that admirable and despicable performance, he disappears into the night from whence he came. How or when he died, whether decently in bed or trussed up to a gallows, remains a riddle for foolhardy commentators. It appears his health had suffered in the pit at Méun; he was thirty years of age and quite bald; with the notch in his under lip where Sermaise had struck him with the sword, and what wrinkles the reader may imagine. In default of portraits, this is all I have been able to piece together, and perhaps even the baldness should be taken as a figure of his destitution. A sinister dog, in all likelihood, but with a look in his eye, and the loose flexile mouth that goes with wit and an overweening sensual temperament. Certainly the sorriest figure on the rolls of fame.

(1877)

From A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSES

WHOLE DUTY OF CHILDREN

A child should always say what's true,
And speak when he is spoken to,
And behave mannerly at table:
At least as far as he is able.

BED IN SUMMER

In winter I get up at night
And dress by yellow candle-light.
In summer, quite the other way,—
I have to go to bed by day.

I have to go to bed and see
The birds still hopping on the tree,
Or hear the grown-up people's feet
Still going past me in the street.

And does it not seem hard to you,
When all the sky is clear and blue,
And I should like so much to play,
To have to go to bed by day?

SYSTEM

Every night my prayers I say,
And get my dinner every day;
And every day that I've been good,
I get an orange after food.

The child that is not clean and neat,
With lots of toys and things to eat,
He is a naughty child, I'm sure —
Or else his dear papa is poor.

HAPPY THOUGHT

The world is so full of a number of things.
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.

TO AUNTIE

Chief of our aunts — not only I,
But all your dozen of nurslings cry —
What did the other children do?
And what were childhood, wanting you?

(1885)

IN THE STATES

With half a heart I wander here
As from an age gone by,
A brother — yet though young in years,
An elder brother, I.

You speak another tongue than mine,
Though both were English born.
I towards the night of time decline,
You mount into the morn.

Youth shall grow great and strong and free.
But age must still decay:
To-morrow for the States,— for me,
England and Yesterday.

(1887)

San Francisco.

HEATHER ALE:

A GALLOWAY LEGEND

From the bonny bells of heather
They brewed a drink long-syne,
Was sweeter far than honey,
Was stronger far than wine.
They brewed it and they drank it,
And lay in a blessed swound
For days and day together
In their dwellings underground.

There rose a king in Scotland,
A fell man to his foes,
He smote the Picts in battle,
He hunted them like roes.
Over miles of the red mountain
He hunted as they fled,
And strewed the dwarfish bodies
Of the dying and the dead.

Summer came in the country,
Red was the heather bell;
But the manner of the brewing
Was none alive to tell.
In graves that were like children's
On many a mountain head,
The Brewsters of the Heather
Lay numbered with the dead.

The king in the red moorland
Rode on a summer's day;
And the bees hummed, and the curlews
Cried beside the way.
The king rode, and was angry,
Black was his brow and pale,
To rule in a land of heather
And lack the Heather Ale.

It fortuned that his vassals,
Riding free on the heath,
Came on a stone that was fallen
And vermin hid beneath.
Rudely plucked from their hiding,
Never a word they spoke:
A son and his aged father—
Last of the dwarfish folk.

And the king sat high on his charger,
He looked on the little men;
And the dwarfish and swarthy couple
Looked at the king again.

Down by the shore he had them;
And there on the giddy brink—
'I will give you life, ye vermin,
For the secret of the drink.'

There stood the son and father;
And they looked high and low;
The heather was red around them,
The sea rumbled below.
And up and spoke the father,
Shrill was his voice to hear:
'I have a word in private,
A word for the royal ear.

'Life is dear to the aged,
And honor a little thing;
I would gladly sell the secret,'
Quoth the Pict to the King.
His voice was small as a sparrow's,
And shrill and wonderful clear:
'I would gladly sell my secret,
Only my son I fear.

'For life is a little matter,
And death is naught to the young;
And I dare not sell my honor
Under the eye of my son.
Take *him*, O king, and bind him,
And cast him far in the deep;
And it 's I will tell the secret
That I have sworn to keep.'

They took the son and bound him,
Neck and heels in a thong,
And a lad took him and swung him,
And flung him far and strong,
And the sea swallowed his body,
Like that of a child of ten;—
And there on the cliff stood the father,
Last of the dwarfish men.

'True was the word I told you:
Only my son I feared;
For I doubt the sapling courage
That goes without the beard.
But now in vain is the torture,
Fire shall never avail:
Here dies in my bosom
The secret of Heather Ale.'

(1891)

GEORGE MEREDITH (1828–1909)

Meredith is perhaps most widely known by his novels, but during recent years his poetry has come in for an increasing share of attention. His radical ideas, especially with respect to the emancipation of women, which are suggested rather than openly advocated in the novels, are explicitly avowed in the poems; and the form of his poetry, while no less characteristic than the style of his prose, is equally distinguished, and at times exquisitely musical. Meredith had to wait a long time to come by his own; his first volume of poems was published as long ago as 1851, and his first work of fiction, *The Shaving of Shagpat*, appeared in 1856. *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859) established his position in the world of fiction, as *Modern Love* (1862) won him recognition as one of the leading poets of the day; an unappreciative review provoked Swinburne to a letter of vigorous protest, in the course of which he said: 'Mr. Meredith is one of the three or four poets now alive whose work, perfect or imperfect, is always as noble in design as it is often faultless in result.' But after winning the suffrages of contemporary men of letters, Meredith had still to conquer the public. *The Egoist* (1879) is usually regarded as turning the tide in his favor, but in reviewing the *Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth* in 1883 Mark Pattison could still write: 'Mr. Meredith is well known, by name, to the widest circle of readers — the novel readers. By name, because his name is a label warning them not to touch.' *Diana of the Crossways* (1885) opened the way for a larger circle of readers not only of this, but of the earlier and later novels, especially in the United States; the poems have made their way much more slowly to any considerable popularity, if indeed they can be said, as a whole, to have won it yet. Except in a few love lyrics and wayside studies, Meredith makes large demands upon his readers' powers of comprehension. He has his own system of philosophy, which needs some familiarity with his modes of expressing it before it can be understood. 'Where other writers appeal to the christian divinities or to humanity,' says a recent critic, 'he speaks, somewhat insistently, of the Earth, a term to which he attaches his own mystic meaning. The Earth is Nature, considered not as the malign stepmother which she is in pessimistic theory, but as a stern yet genial mother and instructress. The Earth gives us our bodies, our fund of power, and our basis of instinct. Life is an adjustment and realization of the inward forces that the Earth generates, and love it is that both tasks and rewards most completely our power of controlling these forces.' These are high themes for young readers, and they may well leave them till they are older and wiser. If they can appreciate Meredith's simpler poems, the understanding of the more difficult ones will come later.

Of the external events of Meredith's life there is little to be said. Of Welsh descent, he was born in Hampshire, and educated in Germany. During his early manhood he worked as a journalist, and in 1866 he was a war correspondent in Italy and Austria, his sympathy with the cause of Italian unity and independence being shown in his novel *Vittoria*, published the following year. The last thirty years of his life were spent in quiet retirement at Boxhill, near London, and the enjoyment of the admiration of an ever-widening circle of readers. In 1905 he received the Order of Merit, perhaps the most distinguished of British decorations, and in 1908, on his eightieth birthday, an address of congratulation was presented to him from the leading writers of the English-speaking world.

LOVE IN THE VALLEY

Under yonder beech-tree single on the greensward,
Couched with her arms behind her golden head,
Knees and tresses folded to slip and ripple idly,
Lies my young love sleeping in the shade.
Had I the heart to slide an arm beneath her,
Press her parting lips as her waist I gather slow,
Waking in amazement she could not but embrace me:
Then would she hold me and never let me go?

Shy as the squirrel and wayward as the swallow,
Swift as the swallow along the river's light

Circleting the surface to meet his mirrored winglets,
Fleeter she seems in her stay than in her flight.
Shy as the squirrel that leaps among the pine-tops,
Wayward as the swallow overhead at set of sun,
She whom I love is hard to catch and conquer
Hard, but oh, the glory of the winning were she won!

When her mother tends her before the laughing mirror,
Tying up her laces, looping up her hair,
Often she thinks, were this wild thing wedded,
More love should I have, and much less care.
When her mother tends her before the lighted mirror,
Loosening her laces, combing down her curls,
Often she thinks, were this wild thing wedded,
I should miss but one for many boys and girls.

Heartless she is as the shadow in the meadows
Flying to the hills on a blue and breezy noon.
No, she is athirst and drinking up her wonder;
Earth to her is young as the slip of the new moon.
Deals she an unkindness, 't is but her rapid measure,
Even as in a dance; and her smile can heal no less:
Like the swinging May-cloud that pelts the flowers with hailstones
Off a sunny border, she was made to bruise and bless.

Lovely are the curves of the white owl sweeping
Wavy in the dusk lit by one large star.
Lone on the fir-branch, his rattle-note unvaried,
Brooding o'er the gloom, spins the brown eve-jar.
Darker grows the valley, more and more forgetting:
So were it with me if forgetting could be willed.
Tell the grassy hollow that holds the bubbling well-spring,
Tell it to forget the source that keeps it filled.

Stepping down the hill with her fair companions,
Arm in arm, all against the raying West,
Boldly she sings, to the merry tune she marches,
Brave in her shape, and sweeter unpossessed.
Sweeter, for she is what my heart first awaking
Whispered the world was; morning light is she.
Love that so desires would fain keep her changeless;
Fain would fling the net, and fain have her free.

Happy happy time, when the white star hovers
Low over dim fields fresh with bloomy dew,
Near the face of dawn, that draws athwart the darkness,
Threading it with color, as yewberries the yew.
Thicker crowd the shades while the grave East deepens
Glowing, and with crimson a long cloud swells.
Maiden still the morn is; and strange she is, and secret;
Strange her eyes; her cheeks are cold as cold sea-shells.

Sunrays, leaning on our southern hills and lighting
Wild cloud-mountains that drag the hills along,
Oft ends the day of your shifting brilliant laughter
Chill as a dull face frowning on a song.
Ay, but shows the South-west a ripple-feathered bosom
Blown to silver while the clouds are shaken and ascend
Scaling the mid-heavens as they stream, there comes a sunset
Rich, deep like love in beauty without end.

When at dawn she sighs, and like an infant to the window
Turns grave eyes craving light, released from dreams,
Beautiful she looks, like a white water-lily,
Bursting out of bud in havens of the streams.

When from bed she rises clothed from neck to ankle
In her long nightgown sweet as boughs of May,
Beautiful she looks, like a tall garden-lily,
Pure from the night, and splendid for the day.

Mother of the dews, dark eye-lashed twilight;
Low-lidded twilight, o'er the valley's brim,
Rounding on thy breast sings the dew-delighted skylark,
Clear as though the dew-drops had their voice in him.
Hidden where the rose-flush drinks the rayless planet,
Fountain-full he pours the spraying fountain-showers.
Let me hear her laughter, I would have her ever
Cool as dew in twilight, the lark above the flowers.

All the girls are out with their baskets for the primrose;
Up lanes, woods through, they troop in joyful bands.
My sweet leads: she knows not why, but now she loiters,
Eyes the bent anemones, and hangs her hands.
Such a look will tell that the violets are peeping,
Coming the rose; and unaware a cry
Springs in her bosom for odors and for color,
Covert and the nightingale; she knows not why.

Kerchiefed head and chin she darts between her tulips,
Streaming like a willow gray in arrowy rain:
Some bend beaten cheek to gravel, and their angel
She will be; she lifts them, and on she speeds again.
Black the driving raincloud breasts the iron gate-way;
She is forth to cheer a neighbor lacking mirth.
So when sky and grass met rolling dumb for thunder
Saw I once a white dove, sole light of earth.

Prim little scholars are the flowers of her garden,
Trained to stand in rows, and asking if they please.
I might love them well but for loving more the wild ones;
O my wild ones! they tell me more than these,
You, my wild one, you tell of honied field-rose,
Violet, blushing eglantine in life; and even as they,
They, by the wayside are earnest of your goodness,
You are of life's on the banks that line the way.

Peering at her chamber the white crowns the red rose,
Jasmine winds the porch with stars two and three.
Parted is the window; she sleeps; the starry jasmine
Breathes a falling breath that carries thoughts of me.
Sweeter unpossessed, have I said of her my sweetest?
Not while she sleeps: while she sleeps the jasmine breathes,
Luring her to love; she sleeps; the starry jasmine
Bears me to her pillow under white rose-wreaths.

Yellow with birdfoot-trefoil are the grass-glades;
Yellow with cinquefoil of the dew-gray leaf;
Yellow with stonecrop; the moss-mounds are yellow;
Blue-necked the wheat sways, yellowing to the sheaf.
Green-yellow, bursts from the copse the laughing yaffle,
Sharp as a sickle is the edge of shade and shine:
Earth in her heart laughs looking at the heavens,
Thinking of the harvest: I look and think of mine.

This I may know: her dressing and undressing
Such a change of light shows as when the skies in sport
Shift from cloud to moonlight; or edging over thunder

Slips a ray of sun; or sweeping into port
White sails furl; or on the ocean borders
White sails lean along the waves leaping green.
Visions of her shower before me, but from eyesight
Guarded she would be like the sun were she seen.

Front door and back of the mossed old farmhouse
Open with the morn, and in a breezy link
Freshly sparkles garden to stripe-shadowed orchard,
Green across a rill where on sand the minnows wink.
Busy in the grass the early sun of summer
Swarms, and the blackbird's mellow fluting notes
Call my darling up with round and roguish challenge:
Quaintest, richest carol of all the singing throats!

Cool was the woodside; cool as her white dairy
Keeping sweet the cream-pan; and there the boys from school,
Cricketing below, rushed brown and red with sunshine;
O the dark translucence of the deep-eyed cool!
Spying from the farm, herself she fetched a pitcher
Full of milk, and tilted for each in turn the beak.
Then a little fellow, mouth up and on tip-toe,
Said, 'I will kiss you': she laughed and leaned her cheek.

Doves of the fir-wood walling high our red roof
Through the long noon coo, crooning through the coo.
Loose droop the leaves, and down the sleepy roadway
Sometimes pipes a chaffinch; loose droops the blue.
Cows flap a slow tail knee-deep in the river,
Breathless, given up to sun and gnat and fly,
Nowhere is she seen; and if I see her nowhere,
Lightning may come, straight rains and tiger sky.

O the golden sheaf, the rustling treasure-armful!
O the nutbrown tresses nodding interlaced!
O the treasure-tresses one another over
Nodding! O the girdle slack about the waist!
Slain are the poppies that shot their random scarlet
Quick amid the wheat-ears: wound about the waist,
Gathered, see these brides of Earth one blush of ripeness!
O the nutbrown tresses nodding interlaced!

Large and smoky red the sun's cold disk drops,
Clipped by naked hills, on violet shaded snow:
Eastward large and still lights up a bower of moonrise,
Whence at her leisure steps the moon aglow.
Nightlong on black print-branches our beech-tree
Gazes in this whiteness: nightlong could I.
Here may life on death or death on life be painted.
Let me clasp her soul to know she cannot die!

Gossips count her faults! they scour a narrow chamber
Where there is no window, read not heaven or her.
'When she was a tiny,' one agèd woman quavers,
Plucks at my heart and leads me by the ear.
Faults she had once as she learned to run and tumbled:
Faults of feature some see, beauty not complete.
Yet, good gossips, beauty that makes holy
Earth and air, may have faults from head to feet.

Hither she comes; she comes to me; she lingers,
Deepens her brown eyebrows, while in new surprise
High rise the lashes in wonder of a stranger,

Yet am I the light and living of her eyes.
Something friends have told her fills her heart to brimming,
Nets her in her blushes, and wounds her, and tames.—
Sure of her haven, O like a dove alighting,
Arms up, she dropped; our souls were in our names.

Soon will she lie like a white frost sunrise.
Yellow oats and brown wheat, barley pale as rye,
Long since your sheaves have yielded to the thresher,
Felt the girdle loosened, seen the tresses fly.
Soon will she lie like a blood-red sunset.
Swift with the to-morrow, green-winged Spring!
Sing from the South-west, bring her back the truants,
Nightingale and swallow, song and dipping wing.

Soft new beech-leaves, up to beamy April
Spreading bough on bough a primrose mountain, you
Lucid in the moon, raise lilies to the sky-fields,
Youngest green transfused in silver shining through:
Fairer than the lily, than the wild white cherry:
Fair as in image my seraph love appears
Born to me by dreams when dawn is at my eyelids;
Fair as in the flesh she swims to me on tears.

Could I find a place to be alone with heaven,
I would speak my heart out: heaven is my need.
Every woodland tree is flushing like the dogwood,
Flashing like the whitebeam, swaying like the reed.
Flushing like the dogwood crimson in October;
Streaming like the flag-reed south-west blown,
Flashing as in gusts the sudden-lighted whitebeam:
All seem to know what is for heaven alone.

(1851–78)

THE LAST WORDS OF JUGGLING JERRY

Pitch here the tent, while the old horse grazes:
By the old hedge-side we 'll halt a stage.
It 's nigh my last above the daisies:
My next leaf 'll be man's blank page,
Yes, my old girl! and it 's no use crying:
Juggler, constable, king, must bow.
One that outjuggles all 's been spying
Long to have me, and has me now.

We 've traveled times to this old common:
Often we 've hung our pots in the gorse.
We 've had a stirring life, old woman!
You, and I, and the old gray horse.
Races, and fairs, and royal occasions,
Found us coming to their call:
Now they 'll miss us at our stations:
There 's a Juggler outjuggles all!

Up goes the lark, as if all were jolly!
Over the duck-pond the willow shakes,
It 's easy to think that grieving 's folly,
When the hand 's firm as driven stakes!
Ay, when we 're strong, and braced, and manful,
Life 's a sweet fiddle: but we 're a batch
Born to become the Great Juggler's han'ful:
Balls he shies up, and is safe to catch.

Here 's where the lads of the village cricket:
I was a lad not wide from here:
Could n't I juggle the bale off the wicket?
Like an old world those days appear!
Donkey, sheep, geese and thatched alehouse — I know 'em!
They are old friends of my halts, and seem,
Somehow, as if kind thanks I owe 'em:
Juggling don't hinder the heart's esteem.

Juggling 's no sin, for we must have victual:
Nature allows us to bait for the fool.
Holding one's own makes us juggle no little;
But, to increase it, hard juggling 's the rule.
You that are sneering at my profession,
Have n't you juggled a vast amount?
There 's the Prime Minister, in one Session,
Juggles more games than my sins 'll count.

I 've murdered insects with mock thunder:
Conscience, for that, in men don't quail.

I 've made bread from the bump of wonder:
That 's my business, and there 's my tale.
Fashion and rank all praised the professor;
Ay! and I 've had my smile from the Queen:
Bravo, Jerry! she meant: God bless her!
Ain't this a sermon on that scene?

I 've studied men from my topsy-turvy
Close, and, I reckon, rather true.
Some are fine fellows: some, right scurvy;
Most, a dash between the two.
But it 's a woman, old girl, that makes me
Think more kindly of the race:
And it 's a woman, old girl, that shakes me
When the Great Juggler I must face.

We two were married, due and legal:
Honest we 've lived since we 've been one.
Lord! I could then jump like an eagle:
You danced bright as a bit o' the sun.
Birds in a May-bush we were! right merry!
All night we kissed, we juggled all day.
Joy was the heart of Juggling Jerry!
Now from his old girl he 's juggled away.

It 's past parsons to console us;
No, nor no doctor fetch for me:
I can die without my bolus;
Two of a trade, lass, never agree!
Parson and Doctor! — don't they love rarely,
Fighting the devil in other men's fields!
Stand up yourself and match him fairly:
Then see how the rascal yields!

I, lass, have lived no gipsy, flaunting
Finery while his poor helpmate grubs:
Coin I 've stored, and you won't be wanting:
You sha 'n't beg from the troughs and tubs.
Nobly you 've stuck to me, though in his kitchen
Duke might kneel to call you Cook!
Palaces you could have ruled and grown rich in,
But your old Jerry you never forsook.

Hand up the chirper! ripe ale winks in it;
Let 's have comfort and be at peace.
Once a stout draft made me light as a linnet.
Cheer up! the Lord must have his lease.
May be — for none see in that black hollow —
It 's just a place where we 're held in pawn,
And, when the Great Juggler makes as to swallow,
It 's just the sword-trick — I ain't quite gone.

Yonder came smells of the gorse, so nutty,
Gold-like and warm: it 's the prime of May.
Better than mortar, brick, and putty,
Is God's house on a blowing day.
Lean me more up the mound; now I feel it;
All the old heath-smells! Ain't it strange?
There 's the world laughing, as if to conceal it!
But He 's by us, juggling the change.

I mind it well, by the sea-beach lying,
Once — it 's long gone — when two gulls we beheld,
Which, as the moon got up, were flying
Down a big wave that sparked and swelled.
Crack went a gun; one fell: the second
Wheeled round him twice, and was off for new luck:
There in the dark her white wing beckoned; —
Give me a kiss — I 'm the bird dead-struck!

(1859)

THE OLD CHARTIST

Whate'er I be, old England is my dam!
So there 's my answer to the judges, clear.
I 'm nothing of a fox, nor of a lamb;
I don't know how to cheat, nor how to leer:
I 'm for the nation!
That 's why you see me by the wayside here,
Returning home from transportation.

It 's Summer in her bath this morn, I think.
I 'm fresh as dew, and chirpy as the birds:
And just for joy to see old England wink
Thro' leaves again, I could harangue the herds:
Is n't it something
To speak out like a man when you 've got words,
And prove you 're not a stupid dumb thing?

They shipped me off for it: I 'm here again.
Old England is my dam, whate'er I be.

Says I, I'll tramp it home, and see the grain:
If you see well, you're king of what you see:
Eyesight is having,
If you're not given, I said, to gluttony.
Such talk to ignorance sounds as raving.

You dear old brook, that from his Grace's park
Come bounding! on you run near my old town:
My lord can't lock the water; nor the lark,
Unless he kills him, can my lord keep down.
Up, is the song-note!
I've tried it, too: — for comfort and renown,
I rather pitched upon the wrong note.

I'm not ashamed: Not beaten's still my boast:
Again I'll rouse the people up to strike.
But home's where different politics jar most.
Respectability the women like.
This form, or that form —
The Government may be hungry pike,
But don't you mount a Chartist platform!

Well, well! Not beaten — spite of them, I shout;
And my estate is suffering for the Cause.—
Now, what is yon brown water-rat about,
Who washes his old poll with busy paws?
What does he mean by 't?
It's like defying all our natural laws,
For him to hope that he'll get clean by't.

His seat is on a mud-bank, and his trade
Is dirt: — he's quite contemptible; and yet
The fellow's all as anxious as a maid
To show a decent dress, and dry the wet.
Now it's his whisker,
And now his nose, and ear; he seems to get
Each moment at the motion brisker!

To see him squat like little chaps at school,
I can't help laughing out with all my might.
He peers, hangs both his fore-paws: bless that fool,
He's bobbing at his frill now! what a sight!
Licking the dish up,
As if he thought to pass from black to white,
Like parson into lawny bishop.

The elms and yellow reed-flags in the sun,
Look on quite grave: — the sunlight flecks his side;
And links of bindweed-flowers round him run,
And shine up doubled with him in the tide.
I'm nearly splitting,
But nature seems like seconding his pride,
And thinks that his behavior's fitting.

That isle o' mud looks baking dry with gold
His needle-muzzle still works out and in.
It really is a wonder to behold,
And makes me feel the bristles of my chin.
Judged by appearance,
I fancy of the two I'm nearer Sin,
And might as well commence a clearance.

And that's what my fine daughter said: — she meant:
Pray hold your tongue, and wear a Sunday face.
Her husband, the young linendraper, spent
Much argument thereon: — I'm their disgrace.
Bother the couple!
I feel superior to a chap whose place
Commands him to be neat and supple.

But if I go and say to my old hen:
I'll mend the gentry's boots, and keep discreet,
Until they grow too violent,— why, then,
A warmer welcome I might chance to meet:
Warmer and better.
And if she fancies her old cock is beat,
And drops upon her knees — so let her!

She suffered for me: — women, you'll observe,
Don't suffer for a Cause, but for a man,
When I was in the dock she showed her nerve:
I saw beneath her shawl my old tea-can
Trembling . . . she brought it
To screw me for my work: she loathed my plan,
And therefore doubly kind I thought it.

I've never lost the taste of that same tea:
That liquor on my logic floats like oil,
When I state facts, and fellows disagree.

For human creatures all are in a coil;
All may want pardon.
I see a day when every pot will boil
Harmonious in one great Tea-garden!

We wait the setting of the Dandy's day,
Before that time!—He's furbishing his dress—
He will be ready for it!—and I say
That yon old dandy rat amid the cress,—
Thanks to hard labor!—
If cleanliness is next to godliness,
The old fat fellow's Heaven's neighbor!

You teach me a fine lesson, my old boy!
I've looked on my superiors far too long.
And small has been my profit as my joy.
You've done the right while I've denounced the wrong.
Prosper me later!
Like you I will despise the sniggering throng,
And please myself and my Creator.

I'll bring the linendraper and his wife
Some day to see you; taking off my hat.
Should they ask why, I'll answer: in my life
I never found so true a democrat.
Base occupation
Can't rob you of your own esteem, old rat!
I'll preach you to the British nation.

(1862)

FRANCE 1870

We look for her that sunlike stood
Upon the forehead of our day,
An orb of nations, radiating food
For body and for mind alway.
Where is the Shape of glad array;
The nervous hands, the front of steel,
The clarion tongue? Where is the bold proud face?
We see a vacant place;
We hear an iron heel.

O she that made the brave appeal
For manhood when our time was dark,
And from our fetters struck the spark
Which was as lightning to reveal
New seasons, with the swifter play
Of pulses, and benigner day;
She that divinely shook the dead
From living man; that stretched ahead
Her resolute forefinger straight,
And marched towards the gloomy gate
Of earths Untried, gave note, and in
The good name of Humanity
Called forth the daring vision! she,
She likewise half corrupt of sin,
Angel and Wanton! Can it be?
Her star has foundered in eclipse,
The shriek of madness on her lips;
Shreds of her, and no more, we see.
There is a horrible convulsion, smothered din,
As of one that in a grave-cloth struggles to be free.

Look not on spreading boughs
For the riven forest tree.
Look down where deep in blood and mire
Black thunder plants his feet and plows
The soil for ruin; that is France:
Still thrilling like a lyre,
Amazed to shivering discord from a fall
Sudden as that the lurid hosts recall
Who met in Heaven the irreparable mischance.
O that is France!
The brilliant eyes to kindle bliss,
The shrewd quick lips to laugh and kiss,
Breasts that a sighing world inspire,
And laughter-dimpled countenance
Whence soul and senses caught desire!

Ever invoking fire from Heaven, the fire
Has seized her, unconsumable, but framed
For all the ecstasies of suffering dire.
Mother of Pride, her sanctuary shamed:
Mother of Delicacy, and made a mark
For outrage: Mother of Luxury, stripped stark:
Mother of Heroes, bondsmen; through the rains,
Across her boundaries, lo the league-long chains!
Fond mother of her martial youth; they pass,
They are specters in her sight, are mown as grass!
Mother of Honor, and dishonored: Mother
Of Glory, she condemned to crown with bays
Her victor, and be fountain of his praise.
Is there another curse? There is another:
Compassionate her madness: is she not
Mother of Reason? she that sees them mown,
Like grass, her young ones! Yea, in the low groan,
And under the fixed thunder of this hour
Which holds the animate world in one foul blot

Tranced circumambient while relentless Power
Beaks at her heart and claws her limbs down-thrown,
She, with the plunging lightnings overshot,
With madness for an armor against pain,
With milkless breasts for little ones athirst,
And round her all her noblest dying in vain,
Mother of Reason is she, trebly cursed,
To feel, to see, to justify the blow;
Chamber to chamber of her sequent brain
Gives answer of the cause of her great woe,
Inexorably echoing through the vaults,
"'T is thus they reap in blood, in blood who sow:
This is the sum of self-absolvèd faults.'
Doubt not that through her grief, with sight supreme,
Through her delirium and despair's last dream,
Through pride, through bright illusion and the brood
Bewildering of her various Motherhood,
The high strong light within her, though she bleeds,
Traces the letters of returned misdeeds.
She sees what seed long sown, ripened of late,
Bears this fierce crop; and she discerns her fate
From origin to agony, and on
As far as the wave washes long and wan
Off one disastrous impulse: for of waves
Our life is, and our deeds are pregnant graves
Blown rolling to the sunset from the dawn.

Ah, what a dawn of splendor, when her sowers
Went forth and bent the necks of populations,
And of their terrors and humiliations
Wove her the starry wreath that earthward lowers
Now in the figure of a burning yoke!
Her legions traversed North and South and East,
Of triumph they enjoyed the glutton's feast:
They grafted the green sprig, they lopped the oak.
They caught by the beard the tempests, by the scalp
The icy precipices, and clove sheer through
The heart of horror of the pinnacled Alp,
Emerging not as men whom mortals knew.
They were the earthquake and the hurricane,
The lightnings and the locusts, plagues of blight,
Plagues of the revel: they were Deluge rain,
And dreaded Conflagration; lawless Might.
Death writes a reeling line along the snows,
Where under frozen mists they may be tracked,
Who men and elements provoked to foes.
And Gods: they were of God and Beast compact:
Abhorred of all. Yet, how they sucked the teats
Of Carnage, thirsty issue of their dam,
Whose eagles, angrier than their oriflamme,
Flushed the vext earth with blood, green earth forgets.
The gay young generations mask her grief;
Where bled her children hangs the loaded sheaf.
Forgetful is green earth; the Gods alone
Remember everlastingly: they strike
Remorselessly, and ever like for like.
By their great memories the Gods are known.

They are with her now, and in her ears, and known.
'T is they that cast her to the dust for Strength,
Their slave, to feed on her fair body's length,
That once the sweetest and the proudest shone;
Scoring for hideous dismemberment
Her limbs, as were the anguish-taking breath
Gone out of her in the insufferable descent
From her high chieftainship; as were she death,
Who hears a voice of justice, feels the knife
Of torture, drinks all ignominy of life.
They are with her, and the painful Gods might weep,
If ever rain of tears came out of Heaven
To flatter Weakness and bid Conscience sleep,
Viewing the woe of this Immortal, driven
For the soul's life to drain the maddening cup
Of her own children's blood implacably:

Unsparing even as they to furrow up
The yellow land to likeness of a sea:
The bountiful fair land of vine and grain,
Of wit and grace and ardor, and strong roots,
Fruits perishable, imperishable fruits;
Furrowed to likeness of the dim gray main
Behind the black obliterating cyclone.

Behold, the Gods are with her, and are known.
Whom they abandon misery persecutes
No more: them half-eyed apathy may loan
The happiness of the pitiable brutes.
Whom the just Gods abandon have no light,
No ruthless light of introspective eyes
That in the midst of misery scrutinize
The heart and its iniquities outright.
They rest, they smile and rest; they have earned perchance
Of ancient service quiet for a term;
Quiet of old men dropping to the worm;
And so goes out the soul. But not of France.
She cries for grief, and to the gods she cries,
For fearfully their loosened hands chastise,
And mercilessly they watch the rod's caress
Ravage her flesh from scourges merciless,
But she, inveterate of brain, discerns
That Pity has as little place as Joy
Among their roll of gifts; for Strength she yearns,
For Strength, her idol once, too long her toy.
Lo, Strength is of the plain root-Virtues born:
Strength shall ye gain by service, prove in scorn,
Train by endurance, by devotion shape.
Strength is not won by miracle or rape.
It is the offspring of the modest years,
The gift of sire to son, through those sound laws
Which we name Gods, which are the righteous cause,
The cause of man, and Manhood's ministers.
Could France accept the fables of her priests,
Who blest her banners in this game of beasts,
And now bid hope that Heaven will intercede
To violate its laws in her sore need,
She would find comfort in their opiates.
Mother of Reason! can she cheat the Fates?
Would she, the champion of the open mind,
The Omnipotent's first gift — the gift of growth —
Consent even for a night-time to be blind,
And sink her soul on the delusive sloth
For fruits ethereal and material, both,
In peril of her place among mankind?
The Mother of the many Laughters might
Call one poor shade of laughter in the light
Of her unwavering lamp to mark what things
The world puts faith in, careless of the truth:
What silly puppet-bodies danced on strings,
Attached by credence, we appear in sooth,
Demanding intercession, direct aid,
When the whole tragic tale hangs on a forfeit blade!

She swung the sword for centuries; in a day
It slipped her, like a stream cut from its source.
She struck a feeble hand, and tried to pray,
Clamored of treachery, and had recourse
To drunken outcries in her dream that Force
Needed but to hear her shouting to obey.
Was she not formed to conquer? The bright plumes
Of crested vanity shed graceful nods:
Transcendent in her foundries, Arts and looms,
Had France to fear the vengeance of the Gods?
Her Gods were then the battle-roll of names
Sheathed in the records of old war; with dance
And song she thrilled her warriors and her dames,
Embracing her Dishonorer: gave him France
From head to foot, France present and to come,
So she might hear the trumpet and the drum —
Bellona and Bacchante! rushing forth
On those stout marching Schoolmen of the North.

Inveterate of brain, well knows she why
Strength failed her, faithful to himself the first;
Her dream is done, and she can read the sky,
And she can take into her heart the worst
Calamity to drug the shameful thought
Of days that made her as the man she served,
A name of terror, but a thing unnerved;
Buying the trickster, by the trickster bought,
She for dominion, he to patch a throne.

Behold the Gods are with her now, and known:
And to know them, not suffering for their sake,
Is madness to the souls that may not take
The easy way of death, being divine.
Her frenzy is not Reason's light extinct
In fumes of foul revenge and desperate sense,
But Reason rising on the storm intense,
Three-faced, with present, past, and future linked;
Informed three-fold with duty to her line.
By sacrifice of blood must she atone,
(Since thus the foe decrees it) to her own:
That she who cannot supplicate, nor cease,
Who will not utter the false word for Peace,
May burn to ashes, with a heart of stone,
Whatso has made her of all lands the flower,
To spring in flame for one redeeming hour,
For one propitious hour arise from prone,
Athwart Ambition's path, and have and wrench
His towering stature from the bitter trench,
Retributive, by her taskmasters shown,—
The spectral trench where bloody seed was sown.

Henceforth of her the Gods are known,
Open to them her breast is laid.
Inveterate of brain, heart-valiant,
Never did fairer creature pant
Before the altar and the blade!

Swift fall the blows, and men upbraid,
And friends give echo blunt and cold,
The echo of the forest to the axe.
Within her are the fires that wax
For resurrection from the mold.

She snatched at Heaven's flame of old,
And kindled nations: she was weak:
Frail sister of her heroic prototype,
The Man; for sacrifice unripe,
She too must fill a Vulture's beak.

Once more, O earthly fortune, speak!
Has she a gleam of victory? one
Outshining of her old historic sun?
For a while! for an hour!
And sunlight on her banner seems
A miracle conceived in dreams,
The faint reflux of orient beams
Through a lifting shower.

Now is she in the vulture-grasp of Power,
And all her sins are manifest to men.
Now may they reckon with punctilious pen
Her list of misdemeanors, and her dower
Of precious gifts that gilded the rank fen
Where lay a wanton greedy to devour.

Now is she in the vulture-grasp of Power.
The harlot sister of the man sublime,
Prometheus, she, though vanquished will not cower.
Offending Heaven, she groveled in the slime;
Offending Man, she aimed beyond her time;
Offending Earth, her Pride was like a tower.

O like the banner on the tower,
Her spirit was, and toyed and curled
Among its folds to lure the world —
It called to follow. But when strong men thrust
The banner on the winds, 't was flame,
And pilgrim-generations tread its dust,
And kiss its track. Disastrously unripe,
Imperfect, changeful, full of blame,
Still the Gods love her, for that of high aim
Is this good France, the bleeding thing they stripe.

She shall rise worthier of her prototype
Through her abasement deep; the pain that runs
From nerve to nerve some victory achieves.
They lie like circle-strewn soaked Autumn-leaves
Which stain the forest scarlet, her fair sons!
And of their death her life is: of their blood
From many streams now urging to a flood,
No more divided, France shall rise afresh.
Of them she learns the lesson of the flesh: —

The lesson writ in red since first Time ran
A hunter hunting down the beast in man:
That till the chasing out of its last vice,
The flesh was fashioned but for sacrifice.
Cast hence the slave's delights, the wanton's lures,
O France! and of thy folly pay full price;
The limitary nature that immures
A spirit dulled in clay shall break, as thrice
It has broken on a night of blood and tears,
To give thy ghost free breath, and joy thy peers.

Immortal mother of a mortal host!
Thou suffering of the wounds that will not slay,
Wounds that bring death but take not life away! —
Stand fast and hearken while thy victors boast:
Hearken, and loathe that music evermore.
Slip loose thy garments woven of pride and shame:
The torture lurks in them, with them the blame
Shall pass to leave thee purer than before.
Undo thy jewels, thinking whence they came,
For what, and of the abominable name
Of her who in imperial beauty wore.

O Mother of a fated fleeting host
Conceived in the past days of sin, and born
Heirs of disease and arrogance and scorn,
Surrender, yield the weight of thy great ghost,
Like wings on air, to what the Heavens proclaim
With trumpets from the multitudinous mounds
Where peace has filled the hearing of thy sons:
Albeit a pang of dissolution rounds
Each new discernment of the undying Ones,
Stoop to these graves here scattered thick and wide
Along thy fields, as sunless billows roll;
These ashes have the lesson for the soul.
'Die to thy Vanity, and to thy Pride,
And to thy Luxury: that thou may'st live,
Die to thyself,' they say, 'as we have died
From dear existence, and the foe forgive,
Nor pray for aught save in our little space
To warm good seed to greet the fair earth's face.'
O mother! take their counsel, and so shall
The broader world breathe in on this thy home,
Light clear for thee the counter-changing dome,
Fire lift thee to the heights meridional,
Strength give thee, like an ocean's vast expanse
Off mountain cliffs, the generations all,
Not whirling in their narrow rings of foam,
But like a river forward. Soaring France!
Now is Humanity on trial in thee:
Now may'st thou gather humankind in fee:
Now prove that Reason is a quenchless scroll;
Make of calamity thine aureole,
And bleeding lead us through the troubles of the sea.

(1871)

THE LARK ASCENDING

He rises and begins to round,
He drops the silver chain of sound,
Of many links without a break,
In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake,
All intervolved and spreading wide,
Like water-dimples down a tide
Where ripple ripple overcurls
And eddy into eddy whirls;
A press of hurried notes that run
So fleet they scarce are more than one,
Yet changingly the trills repeat
And linger ringing while they fleet,
Sweet to the quick o' the ear, and dear
To her beyond the handmaid ear,
Who sits beside our inner springs,
Too often dry for this he brings,
Which seems the very jet of earth
At sight of sun, her music's mirth,
As up he wings the spiral stair,
A song of light, and pierces air
With fountain ardor, fountain play,
To reach the shining tops of day,
And drink in everything discerned
An ecstasy to music turned,
Impelled by what his happy bill
Disperses; drinking, showering still,
Unthinking save that he may give
His voice the outlet, there to live
Renewed in endless notes of glee,
So thirsty of his voice is he,
For all to hear and all to know
That he is joy, awake, aglow,

The tumult of the heart to hear
Through pureness filtered crystal-clear,
And know the pleasure sprinkled bright
By simple singing of delight,
Shrill, irreflective, unrestrained,
Rapt, ringing, on the jet sustained
Without a break, without a fall,
Sweet-silvery, sheer lyrical,
Perennial, quavering up the chord
Like myriad dews of sunny sward
That trembling into fullness shine,
And sparkle dropping argentine;
Such wooing as the ear receives,
From zephyr caught in choric leaves
Of aspens when their chattering net
Is flushed to white with shivers wet;
And such the water-spirit's chime
On mountain heights in morning's prime,
Too freshly sweet to seem excess,
Too animate to need a stress;
But wider over many heads
The starry voice ascending spreads,
Awakening, as it waxes thin,
The best in us to him akin;
And every face to watch him raised,
Puts on the light of children praised,
So rich our human pleasure ripes
When sweetness on sincereness pipes,
Though naught be promised from the seas,
But only a soft-ruffling breeze
Sweep glittering on a still content,
Serenity in ravishment.

For singing till his heaven fills,
'T is love of earth that he instils,
And ever winging up and up,
Our valley is his golden cup;
And he the wine which overflows
To lift us with him as he goes,
But not from earth is he divorced,
He joyfully to fly enforced;
The woods and brooks, the sheep and kine,
He is, the hills, the human line,
The meadows green, the fallows brown,
The dreams of labor in the town;
He sings the sap, the quickened veins,
The wedding song of sun and rains
He is, the dance of children, thanks
Of sowers, shout of primrose-banks,
And eye of violets while they breathe;
All these the circling song will wreathe,
And you shall hear the herb and tree,
The better heart of men shall see,
Shall feel celestially, as long
As you crave nothing save the song.

Was never voice of ours could say
Our inmost in the sweetest way,
Like yonder voice aloft, and link
All hearers in the song they drink:
Our wisdom speaks from failing blood,
Our passion is too full in flood,
We want the key of his wild note
Of truthful in a tuneful throat,
The song seraphically free
Of taint of personality,
So pure that it salutes the suns
The voice of one for millions,
In whom the millions rejoice
For giving their one spirit voice.

Yet men have we, whom we revere,
Now names, and men still housing here,
Whose lives, by many a battle-dint
Defaced, and grinding wheels on flint,
Yield substance, though they sing not, sweet
For song our highest heaven to greet,
Whom heavenly singing gives us new,
Enspheres them brilliant in our blue,
From firmest base to farthest leap,
Because their love of Earth is deep,
And they are warriors in accord
With life to serve and pass reward,
So touching purest, and so heard
In the brain's reflex of yon bird;
Wherefore their soul in me, or mine,
Through self-forgetfulness divine,
In them, that song aloft maintains,
To fill the sky and thrill the plains
With showerings drawn from human stores
As he to silence nearer soars,
Extends the world at wings and dome,
More spacious making more our home,
Till lost on his aërial rings
In light, and then the fancy sings.

(1881)

THE WOODS OF WESTERMAIN

I

Enter these enchanted woods,
You who dare.
Nothing harms beneath the leaves
More than waves a swimmer cleaves.
Toss your heart up with the lark,
Foot at peace with mouse and worm,
Fair you fare.
Only at a dread of dark
Quaver, and they quit their form:
Thousand eyeballs under hoods
Have you by the hair.
Enter these enchanted woods
You who dare.

II

Here the snake across your path
Stretches in his golden bath:
Mossy footed squirrels leap
Soft as winnowing plumes of Sleep:
Yaffles on a chuckle skim
Low to laugh from branches dim:
Up the pine, where sits the star,
Rattles deep the moth-winged jar,
Each has business of his own;
But should you distrust a tone,
Then beware.
Shudder all the haunted roods,
All the eyeballs under hoods
Shroud you in their glare.
Enter these enchanted woods,
You who dare.

III

Open hither, open hence,
Scarce a bramble weaves a fence,
Where the strawberry runs red,
With white star-flower overhead;
Cumbered by dry twig and cone,
Shredded husks of seedlings flown,
Mine of mole and spotted flint:
Of dire wizardry no hint,
Save mayhap the print that shows
Hasty outward-tripping toes,
Heels to terror, on the mold.
These, the woods of Westermain,
Are as others to behold,
Rich of wreathing sun and rain;
Foliage lusterful around
Shadowed leagues of slumbering sound.
Wavy tree-tops, yellow whins,
Shelter eager minikins,
Myriads, free to peck and pipe:
Would you better? Would you worse?
You with them may gather ripe
Pleasures flowing not from purse.
Quick and far as Color flies
Taking the delighted eyes,
You of any well that springs,
May unfold the heaven of things;
Have it homely and within,
And thereof its likeness win,
Will you so in soul's desire:
This do sages grant t' the lyre.
This is being bird and more,
More than glad musician this;
Granaries you will have a store
Past the world of woe and bliss;
Sharing still its bliss and woe;
Harnessed to its hungers, no.
On the throne Success usurps,
You shall seat the joy you feel
Where a race of water chirps,
Twisting hues of flourished steel:
Or where light is caught in hoop
Up a clearing's leafy rise,
Where the crossing deerherds troop
Classic splendors, knightly dyes.
Or, where old-eyed oxen chew
Speculation with the cud,
Read their pool of vision through
Back to hours when mind was mud;
Nigh the knot, which did untwine
Timelessly to drowsy suns;
Seeing Earth a slimy spine,
Heaven a space for winging tons.
Farther, deeper, may you read,
Have you sight for things afield.
Where peeps she, the Nurse of seed,
Cloaked, but in the peep revealed;
Showing a kind face and sweet:
Look you with the soul you see't.
Glory narrowing to grace,
Grace to glory magnified,
Following that will you embrace
Close in arms or aëry wide.
Banished is the white Foam-born
Not from here, nor under ban
Phœbus lyrist, Phœbe's horn,
Pipings of the reedy Pan.
Loved of Earth of old they were,
Loving did interpret her;
And the sterner worship bars
None whom Song has made her stars.
You have seen the huntress moon
Radiantly facing dawn,
Dusky meads between them strewn
Glimmering like downy awn;
Argent Westward glows the hunt,
East the blush about to climb;
One another fair they front,
Transient, yet outshine the time;
Even as dewlight off the rose
In the mind a jewel sows.
Thus opposing grandeurs live
Here if Beauty be their dower:
Doth she of her spirit give,
Fleetingness will spare her flower.
This is in the tune we play,
Which no spring of strength would quell;
In subduing does not slay;
Guides the channel, guards the well:
Tempered holds the young blood-heat,
Yet through measured grave accord,
Hears the heart of wildness beat
Like a centaur's hoof on sward.
Drink the sense the notes infuse,
You a larger self will find:
Sweetest fellowship ensues
With the creatures of your kind.

Ay, and Love, if Love it be
Flaming over *I* and *ME*,
Love meet they who do not shove
Cravings in the van of Love.
Courtly dames are here to woo,
Knowing love if it be true.
Reverence the blossom-shoot
Fervently, they are the fruit.
Mark them stepping, hear them talk,
Goddess, is no myth inane,
You will say of those who walk
In the woods of Westermain.
Waters that from throat and thigh
Dart the sun his arrows back;
Leaves that on a woodland sigh
Chat of secret things no lack;
Shadowy branch-leaves, waters clear,
Bare or veiled they move sincere;
Not by slavish terrors tripped;
Being anew in nature dipped,
Growths of what they step on, these;
With the roots the grace of trees.
Casket-breasts they give, nor hide,
For a tyrant's flattered pride,
Mind, which nourished not by light,
Lurks the shuffling trickster sprite:
Whereof are strange tales to tell;
Some in blood writ, tombed in hell.
Here the ancient battle ends,
Joining two astonished friends,
Who the kiss can give and take
With more warmth than in that world
Where the tiger claws the snake,
Snake her tiger clasps infurled,
And the issue of their fight
Peoples lands in snarling plight.
Here her splendid beast she leads
Silken-leashed and decked with weeds
Wild as he, but breathing faint
Sweetness of unfelt constraint.
Love, the great volcano, flings
Fires of lower Earth to sky;
Love, the sole permitted, sings
Sovereignly of *ME* and *I*.
Bowers he has of sacred shade,
Spaces of superb parade,
Voiceful. . . . But bring you a note
Wrangling, howsoe'er remote,
Discords out of discord spin
Round and round derisive din:
Sudden will a pallor pant
Chill at screeches miscreant;
Owls or specters, thick they flee;
Nightmare upon horror broods;
Hooded laughter, monkish glee,
Gaps the vital air.
Enter these enchanted woods
You who dare.

IV

You must love the light so well
That no darkness will seem fell.
Love it so you could accost
Fellowly a livid ghost,
Whish! The phantom wisps away,
Owns him smoke to cocks of day.
In your breast the light must burn
Fed of you, like corn in quern
Ever plumping while the wheel
Speeds the mill and drains the meal.
Light to light sees little strange,
Only features heavenly new;
Then you touch the nerve of Change,
Then of Earth you have the clue;
Then her two-sexed meanings melt
Through you, wed the thought and felt.
Sameness locks no scurfy pond
Here for Custom, crazy-fond:
Change is on the wing to bud
Rose in brain from rose in blood.
Wisdom throbbing shall you see
Central in complexity;
From her pasture 'mid the beasts
Rise to her ethereal feasts,
Not, though lightnings track your wit
Starward, scorning them you quit:
For be sure the bravest wing
Preens it in our common spring,
Thence along the vault to soar,
You with others, gathering more,
Glad of more, till you reject
Your proud title of elect,
Perilous even here while few
Roam the arched greenwood with you.
Heed that snare.
Muffled by his cavern-cowl
Squats the scaly Dragon-fowl,
Who was lord ere light you drank,
And lest blood of knightly rank
Stream, let not your fair princess
Stray: he holds the leagues in stress,
Watches keenly there.
Oft has he been riven; slain
Is no force in Westermain.
Wait, and we shall forge him curbs,
Put his fangs to uses, tame,
Teach him, quick as cunning herbs,
How to cure him sick and lame.
Much restricted, much enringed,
Much he frets, the hooked and winged,
Never known to spare.
'T is enough: the name of Sage
Hits no thing in nature, naught,
Man the least, save when grave Age
From yon Dragon guards his thought.
Eye him when you hearken dumb
To what words from Wisdom come.

When she says how few are by
Listening to her, eye his eye.
Self, his name declare.
Him shall Change, transforming late,
Wonderously renovate,
Hug himself the creature may:
What he hugs is loathed decay.
Crying, slip thy scales, and slough!
Change will strip his armor off;
Make of him who was all maw,
Inly only thrilling-shrewd,
Such a servant as none saw
Through his days of dragonhood.
Days when growling o'er his bone,
Sharpened he for mine and thine;
Sensitive within alone;
Scaly as in clefts of pine.
Change, the strongest son of Life,
Has the Spirit here to wife.
Lo, their young of vivid breed,
Bear the lights that onward speed,
Threading thickets, mounting glades,
Up the verdurous colonnades,
Round the fluttered curves, and down,
Out of sight of Earth's blue crown,
Whither, in her central space,
Spouts the Fount and Lure o' the chase.
Fount unresting, Lure divine!
There meet all: too late look most.
Fire in water hued as wine,
Springs amid a shadowy host;
Circled: one close-headed mob,
Breathless, scanning divers heaps
Where a Heart begins to throb,
Where it ceases, slow, with leaps.
And 't is very strange, 't is said,
How you spy in each of them
Semblance of that Dragon red,
As the oak in bracken-stem.
And, 't is said, how each and each:
Which commences, which subsides:
First my Dragon! doth beseech
Her who food for all provides.
And she answers with no sign;
Utters neither yea nor nay;
Fires the water hued as wine;
Kneads another spark in clay.
Terror is about her hid;
Silence of the thunders locked;
Lightnings lining the shut lid;
Fixity on quaking rocked.
Lo, you look at Flow and Drought
Interflashed and interwrought:
Ended is begun, begun
Ended, quick as torrents run.
Young Impulsion spouts to sink;
Luridness and luster link;
'T is your come and go of breath;
Mirrored pants the Life, the Death;
Each of either reaped and sown;
Rosiest rosy wanes to crone.
See you so? your senses drift;
'T is a shuttle weaving swift.
Look with spirit past the sense,
Spirit shines in permanence.
That is She, the view of whom
Is the dust within the tomb,
Is the inner blush above,
Look to loathe, or look to love;
Think her Lump, or know her Flame;
Dread her scourge, or read her aim;
Shoot your hungers from their nerve·
Or, in her example, serve.
Some have found her sitting grave:
Laughing, some; or, browed with sweat,
Hurling dust of fool and knave
In a hissing smithy's jet.
More it were not well to speak;
Burn to see, you need but seek.
Once beheld she gives the key
Airing every doorway, she.
Little can you stop or steer
Ere of her you are the seër.
On the surface she will witch,
Rendering Beauty yours, but gaze
Under, and the soul is rich
Past computing, past amaze.
Then is courage that endures
Even her awful tremble yours.
Then, the reflex of that Fount
Spied below, will Reason mount
Lordly and a quenchless force,
Lighting Pain to its mad source,
Scaring Fear till Fear escapes,
Shot through all its phantom shapes.
Then your spirit will perceive
Fleshly seed of fleshly sins;
Where the passions interweave,
How the serpent tangle spins
Of the sense of Earth misprised,
Brainlessly unrecognized;
She being Spirit in her clods,
Footway to the God of Gods.
Then for you are pleasures pure,
Sureties as the stars are sure:
Not the wanton beckoning flags
Which, of flattery and delight,
Wax to the grim Habit-Hags
Riding souls of men to night:
Pleasures that through blood run sane,
Quickening spirit from the brain.
Each of each in sequent birth,
Blood and brain and spirit, three
(Say the deepest gnomes of Earth),
Join for true felicity.
Are they parted, then expect

Some one sailing will be wrecked:
Separate hunting are they sped,
Scan the morsel coveted.
Earth that Triad is: she hides
Joy from him who that divides;
Showers it when the three are one
Glassing her in union.
Earth your haven, Earth your helm,
You command a double realm:
Laboring here to pay your debt,
Till your little sun shall set;
Leaving her the future task:
Loving her too well to ask.
Eglantine that climbs the yew,
She her darkest wreathes for those
Knowing her the Ever-new,
And themselves the kin o' the rose.
Life, the chisel, axe and sword,
Wield who have her depths explored:
Life, the dream, shall be their robe,
Large as air about the globe;
Life, the question, hear its cry
Echoed with concordant Why;
Life, the small self-dragon ramped,
Thrill for service to be stamped,
Ay, and over every height
Life for them shall wave a wand;
That, the last, where sits affright,
Homely shows the stream beyond.
Love the light and be its lynx
You will track her and attain;
Read her as no cruel Sphinx
In the woods of Westermain.
Daily fresh the woods are ranged;
Glooms which otherwhere appal,
Sounded: here, their worths exchanged,
Urban joins with pastoral:
Little lost, save what may drop
Husk-like, and the mind preserves.
Natural overgrowths they lop,
Yet from nature neither swerves,
Trained or savage: for this cause:
Of our Earth they ply the laws,
Have in Earth their feeding root,
Mind of man and bent of brute.
Hear that song; both wild and ruled.
Hear it: is it wail or mirth?
Ordered, bubbled, quite unschooled?
None, and all: it springs of Earth.
O but hear it! 'tis the mind;
Mind that with deep Earth unites,
Round the solid trunk to wind
Rings of clasping parasites.
Music have you there to feed
Simplest and most soaring need.
Free to wind, and in desire
Winding, they to her attached
Feel the trunk a spring of fire,
And ascend to heights unmatched,
Whence the tidal world is viewed
As a sea of windy wheat,
Momently black, barren, rude;
Golden-brown, for harvest meet;
Dragon-reaped from folly-sown;
Bride-like to the sickle-blade:
Quick it varies, while the moan,
Moan of a sad creature strayed,
Chiefly is its voice. So flesh
Conjures tempest-flails to thresh
Good from worthless. Some clear lamps
Light it; more of dead marsh damps.
Monster is it still, and blind,
Fit but to be led by Pain.
Glance we at the paths behind,
Fruitful sight has Westermain.
There we labored, and in turn
Forward our blown lamps discern,
As you see on the dark deep
Far the loftier billows leap,
  Foam for beacon bear.
Hither, hither, if you will,
Drink instruction, or instil,
Run the woods like vernal sap,
Crying, hail to luminousness!
  But have care.
In yourself may lurk the trap:
On conditions they caress.
Here you meet the light invoked:
Here is never secret cloaked.
Doubt you with the monster's fry
All his orbit may exclude;
Are you of the stiff, the dry,
Cursing the not understood;
Grasp you with the monster's claws;
Govern with his truncheon-saws;
Hate, the shadow of a grain;
You are lost in Westermain;
Earthward swoops a vulture sun,
Nighted upon carrion:
Straightway venom wine cups shout
Toasts to One whose eyes are out:
Flowers along the reeling floor
Drip henbane and hellebore:
Beauty, of her tresses shorn,
Shricks as nature's maniac:
Hideousness on hoof and horn
Tumbles, yapping in her track:
Haggard Wisdom, stately once,
Leers fantastical and trips:
Allegory drums the sconce,
Impiousness nibblenips.
Imp that dances, imp that flits,
Imp o' the demon-growing girl,
Maddest! whirl with imp o' the pits
Round you, and with them you whirl
Fast where pours the fountain-rout

Out of Him whose eyes are out;
Multitudes on multitudes,
Drenched in wallowing devilry:
And you ask where you may be,
In what reek of a lair
Given to bones and ogre-broods:
And they yell you Where.
Enter these enchanted woods,
You who dare.

(1883)

From MODERN LOVE

XVI

In our old shipwrecked days there was an hour
When, in the firelight steadily aglow,
Joined slackly, we beheld the red chasm grow
Among the clicking coals. Our library-bower
That eve was left to us; and hushed we sat
As lovers to whom Time is whispering.
From sudden-opened doors we heard them sing:
The nodding elders mixed good wine with chat.
Well knew we that Life's greatest treasure lay
With us, and of it was our talk. 'Ah, yes!
Love dies!' I said: I never thought it less.
She yearned to me that sentence to unsay.
Then when the fire domed blackening, I found
Her cheek was salt against my kiss, and swift
Up the sharp scale of sobs her breast did lift: —
Now am I haunted by that taste! that sound.

XLIII

Mark where the pressing wind shoots javelin-like,
Its skelcton shadow on the broad-backed wave!
Here is a fitting spot to dig Love's grave;
Here where the ponderous breakers plunge and strike,
And dart their hissing tongues high up the sand:
In hearing of the ocean, and in sight
Of those ribbed wind-streaks running into white.
If I the death of Love had deeply planned,
I never could have made it half so sure,
As by the unblest kisses which upbraid
The full-waked senses; or failing that, degrade!
'T is morning: but no morning can restore
What we have forfeited. I see no sin:
The wrong is mixed. In tragic life, God wot,
No villain need be! Passions spin the plot:
We are betrayed by what is false within.

XLVII

We saw the swallows gathering in the sky
And in the osier-isle we heard them noise.
We had not to look back on summer joys,
Or forward to a summer of bright dye:
But in the largeness of the evening earth
Our spirits grew as we went side by side.
The hour became her husband and my bride.
Love that had robbed us so, thus blessed our dearth!
The pilgrims of the year waxed very loud
In multitudinous chatterings, as the flood
Full brown came from the West, and like pale blood
Expanded to the upper crimson cloud.
Love that had robbed us of immortal things,
This little moment mercifully gave,
Where I have seen across the twilight wave
The swan sail with her young beneath her wings.

L

Thus piteously Love closed what he begat;
The union of this ever-diverse pair!
These two were rapid falcons in a snare,
Condemned to do the flitting of the bat.
Lovers beneath the singing sky of May,
They wandered once; clear as the dew on flowers.
But they fed not on the advancing hours:
Their hearts held cravings for the buried day.
Then each applied to each that fatal knife,
Deep questioning, which probes to endless dole.
Ah! what a dusty answer gets the soul
When hot for certainties in this our life! —
In tragic hints here see what evermore
Moves dark as yonder midnight ocean's force,
Thundering like ramping hosts of warrior horse,
To throw that faint thin line upon the shore.

(1851–62)

VICTORIAN AND LATER ESSAYISTS

Victorian prose offers such a bewildering variety of matter and manner that it seems hopeless to think of bringing even its leading examples under any simple classification. Carlyle's potent rhetoric and Ruskin's gorgeous periods give place to the more restrained mannerisms of Pater and Stevenson, and by the side of these conscious artists there are a number of writers who are much more concerned with what they have to say than with how they say it. The scientific movement, which during the second half of the nineteenth century was the predominant influence in almost every field of intellectual activity, also encouraged the stylistic virtues of clearness, simplicity, and directness. Not all the scientists were themselves examples of these virtues, and Huxley's preëminence among them is due more to his literary sympathies and power of presentation than to his original contributions to knowledge, although these were considerable.

Later writers like Butler, Shaw, and Wells, though no longer champions of evolution — for that was a won battle — carry on the freedom and independence of discussion which marked the earlier Victorian evolutionists, and leave few traditional theories and institutions uncriticized. All three write in a lively unaffected style which is, in the best sense, popular. So do Mr. Galsworthy and Mr. Chesterton, though their point of view and method of approach are entirely different from those of the writers mentioned. It was an age of intellectual unrest, of strongly marked personalities, and of widely divergent views. Although it is now separated from us by the chasm created by the Great War, it is still too near for us to formulate any sure judgment upon its general character and tendency, but that it was a time of a great deal of vigorous thinking and much excellent writing there can be no doubt.

THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY
(1825–1895)

From LAY SERMONS

EMANCIPATION — BLACK AND WHITE

Quashie's plaintive inquiry, 'Am I not a man and a brother?' seems at last to have received its final reply — the recent decision of the fierce trial by battle on the other side of the Atlantic fully concurring with that long since delivered here in a more peaceful way.

The question is settled; but even those who are most thoroughly convinced that the doom is just, must see good grounds for repudiating half the arguments which have been employed by the winning side; and for doubting whether its ultimate results will embody the hopes of the victors, though they may more than realize the fears of the vanquished. It may be quite true that some negroes are better than some white men; but no rational man, cognizant of the facts, believes that the average negro is the equal, still less the superior, of the average white man. And, if this be true, it is simply incredible that, when all his disabilities are removed, and our prognathous relative has a fair field and no favor, as well as no oppressor, he will be able to compete successfully with his bigger-brained and smaller-jawed rival, in a contest which is to be carried on by thoughts and not by bites. The highest places in the hierarchy of civilization will assuredly not be within the reach of our dusky cousins, though it is by no means necessary that they should be restricted to the lowest. But whatever the position of stable equilibrium into which the laws of social gravitation may bring the negro, all responsibility for the result will henceforward lie between Nature and him. The white man may wash his hands of it, and the Caucasian conscience be void of reproach for evermore. And this, if we look to the bottom of the matter, is the real justification of the abolition policy.

The doctrine of equal natural rights may be an illogical delusion; emancipation may

convert the slave into a pauperized man; mankind may even have to do without cotton shirts; but all these evils must be faced if the moral law, that no human being can arbitrarily dominate over another without grievous damage to his own nature, be, as many think, as readily demonstrable by experiment as any physical truth. If this be true, no slavery can be abolished without a double emancipation, and the master will benefit by freedom more than the freed-man.

The like considerations apply to all the other questions of emancipation which are at present stirring the world — the multifarious demands that classes of mankind shall be relieved from restrictions imposed by the artifice of man, and not by the necessities of Nature. One of the most important, if not the most important, of all these, is that which daily threatens to become the 'irrepressible' woman question. What social and political rights have women? What ought they to be allowed, or not allowed to do, be, and suffer? And, as involved in, and underlying all these questions, how ought they to be educated?

There are philogynists as fanatical as any 'misogynists' who, reversing our antiquated notions, bid the man look upon the woman as the higher type of humanity; who ask us to regard the female intellect as the clearer and the quicker, if not the stronger; who desire us to look up to the feminine moral sense as the purer and nobler; and bid man abdicate his usurped sovereignty over Nature in favor of the female line. On the other hand, there are persons not to be outdone in all loyalty and just respect for womankind, but by nature hard of head and haters of delusion, however charming, who not only repudiate the new woman-worship which so many sentimentalists and some philosophers are desirous of setting up, but, carrying their audacity further, deny even the natural equality of the sexes. They assert, on the contrary, that in every excellent character, whether mental or physical, the average woman is inferior to the average man, in the sense of having that character less in quantity, and lower in quality. Tell these persons of the rapid perceptions and the instinctive intellectual insight of women, and they reply that the feminine mental peculiarities, which pass under these names, are merely the outcome of a greater impressibility to the superficial aspects of things, and of the absence of that restraint upon expression, which, in men, is imposed by reflection and a sense of responsibility. Talk of the passive endurance of the weaker sex, and opponents of this kind remind you that Job was a man, and that, until quite recent times, patience and long-suffering were not counted among the specially feminine virtues. Claim passionate tenderness as especially feminine, and the inquiry is made whether all the best love-poetry in existence (except, perhaps, the 'Sonnets from the Portuguese') has not been written by men; whether the song which embodies the ideal of pure and tender passion — Adelaida — was written by *Frau* Beethoven; whether it was the Fornarina, or Raphael, who painted the Sistine Madonna. Nay, we have known one such heretic go so far as to lay his hands upon the ark itself, so to speak, and to defend the startling paradox that, even in physical beauty, man is the superior. He admitted, indeed, that there was a brief period of early youth when it might be hard to say whether the prize should be awarded to the graceful undulations of the female figure, or the perfect balance and supple vigor of the male frame. But while our new Paris might hesitate between the youthful Bacchus and the Venus emerging from the foam, he averred that, when Venus and Bacchus had reached thirty, the point no longer admitted of a doubt; the male form having then attained its greatest nobility, while the female is far gone in decadence; and that, at this epoch, womanly beauty, so far as it is independent of grace or expression, is a question of drapery and accessories.

Supposing, however, that all these arguments have a certain foundation; admitting for a moment, that they are comparable to those by which the inferiority of the negro to the white man may be demonstrated, are they of any value as against woman-emancipation? Do they afford us the smallest ground for refusing to educate women as well as men? No mistake is so commonly made by clever people as that of assuming a cause to be bad because the arguments of its supporters are, to a great extent, nonsensical. And we conceive that those who may laugh at the arguments of the extreme

philogynists, may yet feel bound to work heart and soul towards the attainment of their practical ends.

As regards education, for example. Granting the alleged defects of women, is it not somewhat absurd to sanction and maintain a system of education which would seem to have been specially contrived to exaggerate all these defects?

Naturally not so firmly strung, nor so well balanced, as boys, girls are in a great measure debarred from the sports and physical exercises which are justly thought absolutely necessary for the full development of the vigor of the more favored sex. Women are, by nature, more excitable than men — prone to be swept by tides of emotion, proceeding from hidden and inward, as well as from obvious and external causes; and female education does its best to weaken every physical counterpoise to this nervous mobility — tends in all ways to stimulate the emotional part of the mind and to stunt the rest. We find girls naturally timid, inclined to dependence, born conservatives; and we teach them that independence is unladylike; that blind faith is the right frame of mind; and that whatever we may be permitted, and indeed encouraged, to do to our brother, our sister is to be left to the tyranny of authority and tradition. With few insignificant exceptions, girls have been educated either to be drudges, or toys, beneath a man; or a sort of angels above him; the highest ideal aimed at oscillating between Clärchen and Beatrice. The possibility that the ideal of womanhood lies neither in the fair saint, nor in the fair sinner; that the female type of character is neither better nor worse than the male, but only weaker; that women are meant neither to be men's guides nor their playthings, but their comrades, their fellows and their equals, so far as Nature puts no bar to that equality, does not seem to have entered into the minds of those who have had the conduct of the education of girls.

If the present system of female education stands self-condemned, as inherently absurd; and if that which we have just indicated is the true position of woman, what is the first step towards a better state of things? We reply, emancipate girls. Recognize the fact that they share the senses, perceptions, feelings, reasoning powers, emotions, of boys, and that the mind of the average girl is less different from that of the average boy, than the mind of one boy is from that of another; so that whatever argument justifies a given education for all boys, justifies its application to girls as well. So far from imposing artificial restrictions upon the acquirement of knowledge by women, throw every facility in their way. Let our Faustinas, if they will, toil through the whole round of

> 'Juristerei und Medizin,
> Und leider! auch Philosophie.'

Let us have 'sweet girl graduates' by all means. They will be none the less sweet for a little wisdom; and the 'golden hair' will not curl the less gracefully outside the head by reason of there being brains within. Nay, if obvious practical difficulties can be overcome, let those women who feel inclined to do so descend into the gladiatorial arena of life, not merely in the guise of *retiariae,* as heretofore, but as bold *sicariae,* breasting the open fray. Let them, if they so please, become merchants, barristers, politicians. Let them have a fair field, but let them understand, as the necessary correlative, that they are to have no favor. Let Nature alone sit high above the lists, 'rain influence and judge the prize.'

And the result? For our parts, though loth to prophesy, we believe it will be that of other emancipations. Women will find their place, and it will neither be that in which they have been held, nor that to which some of them aspire. Nature's old salique law will not be repealed, and no change of dynasty will be effected. The big chests, the massive brains, the vigorous muscles and stout frames, of the best men will carry the day, whenever it is worth their while to contest the prizes of life with the best women. And the hardship of it is, that the very improvement of the women will lessen their chances. Better mothers will bring forth better sons, and the impetus gained by the one sex will be transmitted, in the next generation, to the other. The most Darwinian of theorists will not venture to propound the doctrine, that the physical disabilities under which women have hitherto labored, in the struggle for existence with men, are likely to be removed by even the most skilfully conducted process of educational selection.

We are, indeed, fully prepared to believe that the bearing of children may, and ought, to become as free from danger and disability, to the civilized woman, as it is to the savage; nor is it improbable that, as society advances towards its right organization, motherhood will occupy a less space of woman's life than it has hitherto done. But still, unless the human species is to come to an end altogether — a consummation which can hardly be desired by even the most ardent advocate of 'women's rights' — somebody must be good enough to take the trouble of annually adding to the world exactly as many people as die out of it. In consequence of some domestic difficulties, Sydney Smith is said to have suggested that it would have been good for the human race had the model offered by the hive been followed, and had all the working part of the female community been neuters. Failing any thorough-going reform of this kind, we see nothing for it but the old division of humanity into men potentially, or actually, fathers, and women potentially, if not actually, mothers. And we fear that so long as this potential motherhood is her lot, woman will be found to be fearfully weighted in the race of life.

The duty of man is to see that not a grain is piled upon that load beyond what Nature imposes; that injustice is not added to inequality.

(1865)

SAMUEL BUTLER (1835–1902)

From THE NOTE-BOOKS

YOUNG PEOPLE

With regard to sexual matters, the best opinion of our best medical men, the practice of those nations which have proved most vigorous and comely, the evils that have followed this or that, the good that has attended upon the other should be ascertained by men who, being neither moral nor immoral and not caring two straws what the conclusion arrived at might be, should desire only to get hold of the best available information. The result should be written down with some fullness and put before the young of both sexes as soon as they are old enough to understand such matters at all. There should be no mystery or reserve. None but the corrupt will wish to corrupt facts; honest people will accept them eagerly, whatever they may prove to be, and will convey them to others as accurately as they can. On what pretext therefore can it be well that knowledge should be withheld from the universal gaze upon a matter of such universal interest? It cannot be pretended that there is nothing to be known on these matters beyond what unaided boys and girls can be left without risk to find out for themselves. Not one in a hundred who remembers his own boyhood will say this. How, then, are they excusable who have the care of young people and yet leave a matter of such vital importance so almost absolutely to take care of itself, although they well know how common error is, how easy to fall into and how disastrous in its effects both upon the individual and the race?

Next to sexual matters there are none upon which there is such complete reserve between parents and children as on those connected with money. The father keeps his affairs as closely as he can to himself and is most jealous of letting his children into a knowledge of how he manages his money. His children are like monks in a monastery as regards money and he calls this training them up with the strictest regard to principle. Nevertheless he thinks himself ill-used if his son, on entering life, falls a victim to designing persons whose knowledge of how money is made and lost is greater than his own.

THE FAMILY

I

I believe that more unhappiness comes from this source than from any other — I mean from the attempt to prolong family connection unduly and to make people hang together who would never naturally do so. The mischief among the lower classes is not so great, but among the middle and upper classes it is killing a large number daily. And the old people do not really like it much better than the young.

II

On my way down to Shrewsbury some time since I read the Bishop of Carlisle's

Walks in the Regions of Science, then just published, and found the following on p. 129 in the essay which is entitled 'Man's Place in Nature.' After saying that young sparrows or robins soon lose sight of their fellow-nestlings and leave off caring for them, the bishop continues:

'Whereas "children of one family" are constantly found joined together by a love which only grows with years, and they part for their posts of duty in the world with the hope of having joyful meetings from time to time, and of meeting in a higher world when their life on earth is finished.'

I am sure my great-grandfather did not look forward to meeting his father in heaven — his father had cut him out of his will; nor can I credit my grandfather with any great longing to rejoin my great-grandfather — a worthy man enough, but one with whom nothing ever prospered. I am certain my father, after he was 40, did not wish to see my grandfather any more — indeed, long before reaching that age he had decided that Dr. Butler's life should not be written, though R. W. Evans would have been only too glad to write it. Speaking for myself, I have no wish to see my father again, and I think it likely that the Bishop of Carlisle would not be more eager to see his than I mine.

UNCONSCIOUS HUMOR

'Writing to the Hon. Mrs. Watson in 1856, Charles Dickens says: "I have always observed within my experience that *the men who have left home very young* have, *many long years afterwards*, had the tenderest regard for it. That's a pleasant thing to think of as one of the wise adjustments of this life of ours."'

HOMER'S *ODYSSEY*

From the description of the meeting between Ulysses and Telemachus it is plain that Homer considered it quite as dreadful for relations who had long been separated to come together again as for them to separate in the first instance. And this is about true.

MELCHISEDEC

He was a really happy man. He was without father, without mother and without descent. He was an incarnate bachelor. He was a born orphan.

BACON FOR BREAKFAST

Now (1893), when I am abroad, being older and taking less exercise, I do not want any breakfast beyond coffee and bread and butter, but when this note was written (1880) I liked a modest rasher of bacon in addition, and used to notice the jealous indignation with which heads of families who enjoyed the privilege of Cephas and the brethren of our Lord regarded it. There were they with three or four elderly unmarried daughters as well as old mama — how could they afford bacon? And there was I, a selfish bachelor — The appetizing, savory smell of my rasher seemed to drive them mad. I used to feel very uncomfortable, very small and quite aware how low it was of me to have bacon for breakfast and no daughters instead of daughters and no bacon. But when I consulted the oracles of heaven about it, I was always told to stick to my bacon and not to make a fool of myself. I despised myself but have not withered under my own contempt so completely as I ought to have done.

GOD AND MAN

To love God is to have good health, good looks, good sense, experience, a kindly nature and a fair balance of cash in hand. 'We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.' To be loved by God is the same as to love Him. We love Him because He first loved us.

THE HOMERIC DEITY AND THE *PALL MALL GAZETTE*

A writer in the *Pall Mall Gazette* (I think in 1874 or 1875, and in the autumn months, but I cannot now remember) summed up Homer's conception of a god as that of a 'superlatively strong, amorous, beautiful, brave and cunning man.' This is pretty much what a good working god ought to be, but he should also be kind and have a strong sense of humor, together with a contempt for the vices of meanness and for the meannesses of virtue. After saying what I have quoted above the writer in the *Pall Mall Gazette*

goes on, 'An impartial critic can judge for himself how far, if at all, this is elevated above the level of mere fetish worship.' Perhaps it is that I am not an impartial critic, but, if I am allowed to be so, I should say that the elevation above mere fetish worship was very considerable.

GOOD BREEDING THE SUMMUM BONUM

When people ask what faith we would substitute for that which we would destroy, we answer that we destroy no faith and need substitute none. We hold the glory of God to be the summum bonum, and so do Christians generally. It is on the question of what is the glory of God that we join issue. We say it varies with the varying phases of God as made manifest in his works, but that, so far as we are ourselves concerned, the glory of God is best advanced by advancing that of man. If asked what is the glory of man we answer 'Good breeding'—using the words in their double sense and meaning both the continuance of the race and that grace of manner which the words are more commonly taken to signify. The double sense of the words is all the more significant for the unconsciousness with which it is passed over.

ADVICE TO THE YOUNG

You will sometimes find your elders laying their heads together and saying what a bad thing it is for young men to come into a little money—that those always do best who have no expectancy, and the like. They will then quote some drivel from one of the Kingsleys about the deadening effect an income of *£300* a year will have upon a man. Avoid any one whom you may hear talk in this way. The fault lies not with the legacy (which would certainly be better if there were more of it) but with those who have so mismanaged our education that we go in even greater danger of losing the money than other people are.

RELIGION

Is there any religion whose followers can be pointed to as distinctly more amiable and trustworthy than those of any other? If so, this should be enough. I find the nicest and best people generally profess no religion at all, but are ready to like the best men of all religions.

HEAVEN AND HELL

Heaven is the work of the best and kindest men and women. Hell is the work of prigs, pedants and professional truth-tellers. The world is an attempt to make the best of both.

PRIGGISHNESS

The essence of priggishness is setting up to be better than one's neighbor. Better may mean more virtuous, more clever, more agreeable or what not. The worst of it is that one cannot do anything outside eating one's dinner or taking a walk without setting up to know more than one's neighbors. It was this that made me say in *Life and Habit* that I was among the damned in that I wrote at all. So I am; and I am often very sorry that I was never able to reach those more saintly classes who do not set up as instructors of other people. But one must take one's lot.

LOHENGRIN

He was a prig. In the bedroom scene with Elsa he should have said that her question put him rather up a tree but that, as she wanted to know who he was, he would tell her and would let the Holy Grail slide.

SWELLS

People ask complainingly what swells have done, or do, for society that they should be able to live without working. The good swell is the creature towards which all nature has been groaning and travailing together until now. He is an ideal. He shows what may be done in the way of good breeding, health, looks, temper and fortune. He realizes men's dreams of themselves, at any rate vicariously. He preaches the gospel of grace. The world is like a spoilt child, it has this good thing given it at great expense and then says it is useless!

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

These are reconciled in amiable and sensible people but nowhere else.

GENTLEMAN

If we are asked what is the most essential characterization that underlies this word, the word itself will guide us to gentleness, to absence of such things as brow-beating, overbearing manners and fuss, and generally to the consideration for other people.

THE FINEST MEN

I suppose an Italian peasant or a Breton, Norman or English fisherman, is about the best thing nature does in the way of men — the richer and the poorer being alike mistakes.

ON BEING A SWELL ALL ROUND

I have never in my life succeeded in being this. Sometimes I get a new suit and am tidy for a while in part, meanwhile the hat, tie, boots, gloves and underclothing all clamor for attention and, before I have got them well in hand, the new suit has lost its freshness. Still, if ever I do get any money, I will try and make myself really spruce all round till I find out, as I probably shall in about a week, that if I give my clothes an inch they will take an ell.

(1880)

MONEY

is the last enemy that shall never be subdued. While there is flesh there is money — or the want of money; but money is always on the brain so long as there is a brain in reasonable order.

A LUXURIOUS DEATH

Death in anything like luxury is one of the most expensive things a man can indulge himself in. It costs a lot of money to die comfortably, unless one goes off pretty quickly.

MONEY, HEALTH AND REPUTATION

Money, if it live at all, that is to say if it be reproductive and put out at any interest, however low, is mortal and doomed to be lost one day, though it may go on living through many generations of one single family if it be taken care of. No man is absolutely safe. It may be said to any man, 'Thou fool, this night thy money shall be required of thee.' And reputation is like money: it may be required of us without warning. The little unsuspected evil on which we trip may swell up in a moment and prove to be the huge, Janus-like mountain of unpardonable sin. And his health may be required of any fool, any night or any day.

A man will feel the loss of money more keenly than loss of his bodily health, so long as he can keep his money. Take his money away and deprive him of the means of earning any more, and his health will soon break up; but leave him his money and, even though his health breaks up and he dies, he does not mind it so much as we think. Money losses are the worst, loss of health is next worse and loss of reputation comes in a bad third. All other things are amusements provided money, health and good name are untouched.

SOLICITORS

A man must not think he can save himself the trouble of being a sensible man and a gentleman by going to his solicitor, any more than he can get himself a sound constitution by going to his doctor; but a solicitor can do more to keep a tolerably well-meaning fool straight than a doctor can do for an invalid. Money is to the solicitor what souls are to the parson or life to the physician. He is our money-doctor.

DOCTORS

Going to your doctor is having such a row with your cells that you refer them to your solicitor. Sometimes you, as it were, strike against them and stop their food, when they go on strike against yourself. Sometimes you file a bill in Chancery against them and go to bed.

PRIESTS

We may find an argument in favor of priests if we consider whether man is capable of doing for himself in respect of his moral and spiritual welfare (than which nothing can be more difficult and intricate) what it is so clearly better for

him to leave to professional advisers in the case of his money and his body which are comparatively simple and unimportant.

GEORGE MOORE (1853–)

From MODERN PAINTING

THE ORGANIZATION OF ART

No fact is more painful to the modern mind than that men are not born with equal brains; and every day we grow more and more determined to thwart Nature's desire of inequality by public education. Whether everybody should be taught to read and write I leave to politicians — the matter is not important; but that the nation should not be instructed in drawing, music, painting, and English literature I will never cease to maintain. Everything that has happened in England for the last thirty years goes to prove that systematized education in art means artistic decadence.

To the ordinary mind there is something very reassuring in the words institutions, professors, examinations, medals, and titles of all kinds. All these things have been given of late years to art, and parents and guardians need no longer have any fear for those confided to their charge: the art of painting has been recognized as a profession! The principal institution where this profession is practised is called the Royal Academy. It owes its existence to the taste of a gentleman known as George the Third, and it has been dowered by the State to the extent of at least three hundred thousand pounds. Professors from Oxford, even bishops, dine there. The members of this institution put R.A. after their names; the president has been made a baronet; there was even a rumor that he was to be made a lord, and that he was not we must consider as another blow dealt against the dignity of art.

Literature does not offer so much scope for organization as painting; but strenuous efforts are being made to organize it, and, by the aid of academies, examinations, and crowns, hopes are entertained that, before long, it will be brought into line with the other professions. And the journalists too are anxious to 'erect their craft to the dignity of a profession which shall confer upon its members *certain social status* like that of the barrister and the lawyer.' Entrance is to be strictly conditional; no one is to have the right to practise without a diploma, and members are to be entitled to certain letters after their names. A movement is on foot to Churton-Collinise English literature at the universities, and every month Mr. Walter Besant raises a wail in the *Author* that the peerage is not as open to three-volume novelists as it is to brewers. He bewails the fact that no eminent man of letters, with the exception of Lord Tennyson, has been made the enforced associate of brewers and politicians. Mr. Besant does not think that titles in these democratic days are foolish and absurd, pitiful in the personality of those who own them by inheritance, grotesque in the personality of those on whom they have been conferred. Mr. Besant does not see that the desire of the baker, the brewer, the butcher, and I may add the three-volume novelist, to be addressed by small tradesmen and lackeys as 'yer lordship,' raises a smile on the lips of even the most *blasé*.

I am advocating an unpopular *régime* I know, for the majority believe that art is in Queer Street if new buildings are not being raised, if official recognition of merits is not proclaimed, and if the newspapers do not teem with paragraphs concerning the homes of the Academicians. The wailing and gnashing of teeth that were heard when an intelligent portion of the Press induced Mr. Tate to withdraw his offer to build a gallery and furnish it with pictures by Messrs. Herkomer, Fildes, Leader, Long, are not forgotten. It was not urged that the pictures were valuable pictures; the merit or demerit of the pictures was not what interested, but the fact that a great deal of money was going to be spent, and that titles, badges, medals, crowns, would be given to those whose pictures were enshrined in the new temple of art. The Tate Gallery touched these folk as would an imposing review of troops, a procession of judges, or a coronation in Westminster Abbey. Their senses were tickled by the prospect of a show, their minds were stirred by some idea of organization — something was about to be organized, and nothing appeals so much to the vulgar mind as organization.

An epoch is represented by a word, and to organize represents the dominant idea of our civilization. To organize is to be respectable, and as every one wants to be respectable, every one dreams of new schemes of organization. Soldiers, sailors, policemen, members of parliament, independent voters, clerks in the post office, bus drivers, dockers, every imaginable variety of worker, domestic servants — it is difficult to think of any class that has not been organized of late years. There is a gentleman in parliament who is anxious to do something in the way of social organization for the gipsies. The gipsies have not appealed to him; they have professed no desire to have their social status raised; they have, I believe, disclaimed through their king, whoever he may be, all participation in the scheme of this benevolent gentleman. Nor does any sense of the absurdity of his endeavor blight the worthy gentleman's ardor. How should it? He, like the other organizers, is an unreasoning instrument in a great tendency of things. To organize something — or, put it differently, to educate some one — is to-day every man's ambition. So long as it is not himself, it matters no jot to him whom he educates. The gipsy under the hedge, the artist painting under a hill, it matters not. A technical school of instruction would enable the gipsy to harness his horse better than he does at present; and the artist would paint much better if he were taught to stipple, and examined by salaried professors in stipple, and given prizes for stippling. The general mind of our century is with education and organization of every kind, and from this terrible general mind art seems unable to escape. Art, that poor little gipsy whose very condition of existence is freedom, who owns no code of laws, who evades all regulations, who groups himself under no standards, who can live only in disastrous times, when the world's attention is drawn to other things, and allows him life in shelter of the hedges, and dreams in sight of the stars, finds himself forced into a uniform — poor little fellow, how melancholy he looks on his high stool in the South Kensington Museum, and notwithstanding the professors his hand drops from the drawing-board, unable to accomplish the admired stipple.

But solemn members of parliament are certain that official recognition must be extended to art. Art is an educational influence, and the Kensington galleries are something more than agreeable places, where sweethearts can murmur soft nothings under divine masterpieces. The utilitarian M.P. must find some justification for art; he is not sensible enough to understand that art justifies its own existence, that it is its own honor and glory; and he nourishes a flimsy lie, and votes that large sums of money shall be spent in endowing schools of art and founding picture galleries. Then there is another class — those who have fish to fry, and to whom art seems a convenient frying-pan. Mr. Tate craves for a museum to be called Tate's; or, if his princely gift gained him a title, which it may, the museum would be called — What would be an appropriate name? There are men too who have trifles to sell, and they talk loudly of the glories of modern art, and the necessity of a British Luxembourg.

That France should have a Luxembourg is natural enough; that we should have one would be anomalous. We are a free-trading country. I pass over the failure of the Luxembourg to recognize genius, to save the artist of genius a struggle with insolent ignorance. What did the Luxembourg do for Corot, Millet, Manet, Degas, Monet, Renoir, Sisley, Pissaro? The Luxembourg chose rather to honor such pretentious mediocrities as Bouguereau, Jules Lefebvre, Jules Breton, and their like. What has our Academy done to rescue struggling genius from poverty and obscurity? Did it save Alfred Stevens, the great sculptor of his generation, from the task of designing fire-irons? How often did the Academy refuse Cecil Lawson's pictures? When did they accept him, was it not because he had become popular in spite of the Academy? Did not the Academy refuse Mr. Whistler's portrait of his mother, and was it not hung at the last moment owing to a threat of one of the Academicians to resign if a place was not found for it? Place was found for it seven feet above the line. Has not the Academy for the last five-and-twenty years lent the whole stress and authority of its name to crush Mr. Whistler? Happily his genius was sufficient for the fight, and it was not until he had conquered past all question that he left this country. The record of the Academy is a significant one. But if it

has exercised a vicious influence in art, its history is no worse than that of other academies. Here, as elsewhere, the Academy has tolerated genius when it was popular, and when it was not popular it has trampled upon it.

We have Free Trade in literature, why should we not have Free Trade in art? Why should not every artist go into the market without title or masquerade that blinds the public to the value of what he has to sell? I would turn art adrift, titleless, R.A.-less, out into the street and field, where, under the light of his original stars, the impassioned vagrant might dream once more, and for the mere sake of his dreams.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW
(1856–)

From DRAMATIC OPINIONS AND ESSAYS

THE CASE FOR THE CRITIC-DRAMATIST

A discussion has arisen recently as to whether a dramatic critic can also be a dramatic author without injury to his integrity and impartiality. The feebleness with which the point has been debated may be guessed from the fact that the favorite opinion seems to be that a critic is either an honest man or he is not. If honest, then dramatic authorship can make no difference to him. If not, he will be dishonest whether he writes plays or not. This childish evasion cannot, for the honor of the craft, be allowed to stand. If I wanted to ascertain the melting-point of a certain metal, and how far it would be altered by an alloy of some other metal, and an expert were to tell me that a metal is either fusible or it is not — that if not, no temperature will melt it; and if so, it will melt anyhow — I am afraid I should ask that expert whether he was a fool himself or took me for one. Absolute honesty is as absurd an abstraction as absolute temperature or absolute value. A dramatic critic who would die rather than read an American pirated edition of a copyright English book might be considered an absolutely honest man for all practical purposes on that one particular subject — I say on that one, because very few men have more than one point of honor; but as far as I am aware, no such dramatic critic exists. If he did, I should regard him as a highly dangerous monomaniac. That honesty varies inversely with temptation is proved by the fact that every additional penny on the income-tax yields a less return than the penny before it, showing that men state their incomes less honestly for the purpose of taxation at sevenpence in the pound than sixpence. The matter may be tested by a simple experiment. Go to one of the gentlemen whose theory is that a man is either honest or he is not, and obtain from him the loan of half-a-crown on some plausible pretext of a lost purse or some such petty emergency. He will not ask you for a written acknowledgment of the debt. Return next day and ask for a loan of £500 without a promissory note, on the ground that you are either honest or not honest, and that a man who will pay back half a crown without compulsion will also pay back £500. You will find that the theory of absolute honesty will collapse at once.

Are we then to believe that the critic-dramatist who stands to make anything from five hundred to ten thousand pounds by persuading a manager to produce his plays, will be prevented by his honesty from writing about that manager otherwise than he would if he had never written a play and were quite certain that he never should write one? I can only say that people who believe such a thing would believe anything. I am myself a particularly flagrant example of the critic-dramatist. It is not with me a mere case of an adaptation or two raked up against me as incidents in my past. I have written half-a-dozen 'original' plays, four of which have never been performed; and I shall presently write half-a-dozen more. The production of one of them, even if it attained the merest success of esteem, would be more remunerative to me than a couple of years of criticism. Clearly, since I am no honester than other people, I should be the most corrupt flatterer in London if there were nothing but honesty to restrain me. How is it, then, that the most severe criticisms of managers come from me and from my fellow critic-dramatists, and that the most servile puffery comes from writers whose every sentence proved that they have nothing to hope or

fear from any manager? There are a good many answers to this question, one of the most obvious being that as the respect inspired by a good criticism is permanent, whilst the irritation it causes is temporary, and as, on the other hand, the pleasure given by a venal criticism is temporary, and the contempt it inspires permanent, no man really secures his advancement as a dramatist by making himself despised as a critic. The thing has been tried extensively during the last twenty years; and it has failed. For example, the late Frank Marshall, a dramatist and an extravagantly enthusiastic admirer of Sir Henry Irving's genius, followed a fashion which at one time made the Lyceum Theatre a sort of court formed by a retinue of literary gentlemen. I need not question either their sincerity or the superiority of Canute to their idolatry; for Canute never produced their plays: 'Robert Emmet' and the rest of their masterpieces remain unacted to this day. It may be said that this brings us back to honesty as the best policy; but honesty has nothing to do with it: plenty of the men who know that they can get along faster fighting than crawling, are no more honest than the first Napoleon was. No virtue, least of all courage, implies any other virtue. The cardinal guarantee for a critic's integrity is simply the force of the critical instinct itself. To try to prevent me from criticizing by pointing out to me the superior pecuniary advantages of puffing is like trying to keep a young Irving from going on the stage by pointing out the superior pecuniary advantages of stockbroking. If my own father were an actor-manager, and his life depended on his getting favorable notices of his performance, I should orphan myself without an instant's hesitation if he acted badly. I am by no means the willing victim of this instinct. I am keenly susceptible to contrary influences — to flattery, which I swallow greedily if the quality is sufficiently good; to the need of money, to private friendship or even acquaintanceship, to the pleasure of giving pleasure and the pain of giving pain, to consideration of other people's circumstances and prospects, to personal likes and dislikes, to sentimentality, pity, chivalry, pugnacity and mischief, laziness and cowardice, and a dozen other human conditions which make the critic vulnerable; but the critical instinct gets the better of them all. I spare no effort to mitigate its inhumanity, trying to detect and strike out of my articles anything that would give pain without doing any good. Those who think the things I say severe, or even malicious, should just see the things I do *not* say. I do my best to be partial, to hit out at remediable abuses rather than at accidental shortcomings, and at strong and responsible people rather than weak and helpless ones. And yet all my efforts do not alter the result very much. So stubborn is the critic within me, that with every disposition to be as good-natured and as popular an authority as the worst enemy of art could desire, I am to all intents and purposes incorruptible. And that is how the dramatist-critic, if only he is critic enough, 'slates' the actor-manager in defiance of the interest he has in conciliating him. He cannot help himself, any more than the ancient mariner could help telling his story. And the actor-manager can no more help listening than the wedding guest could. In short, the better formula would have been, that a man is either a critic or not a critic; that to the extent to which he is one he will criticize the managers in spite of heaven and earth; and that to the extent to which he is not, he will flatter them anyhow, to save himself trouble.

The advantage of having a play criticized by a critic who is also a playwright is as obvious as the advantage of having a ship criticized by a critic who is also a master shipwright. Pray observe that I do not speak of the criticism of dramas and ships by dramatists and shipwrights who are not also critics; for that would be no more convincing than the criticism of acting by actors. Dramatic authorship no more constitutes a man a critic than actorship constitutes him a dramatic author; but a dramatic critic learns as much from having been a dramatic author as Shakespeare or Mr. Pinero from having been actors. The average London critic, for want of practical experience, has no real confidence in himself: he is always searching for an imaginary 'right' opinion, with which he never dares to identify his own. Consequently every public man finds that as far as the press is concerned his career divides itself into two parts: the first, during which the critics are afraid to praise him; and the second, during

which they are afraid to do anything else. In the first, the critic is uncomfortably trying to find faults enough to make out a case for his timid coldness: in the second, he is eagerly picking out excellencies to justify his eulogies. And of course he blunders equally in both phases. The faults he finds are either inessential or are positive reforms, or he blames the wrong people for them: the triumphs of acting which he announces are stage tricks that any old hand could play. In criticizing actresses he is an open and shameless voluptuary. If a woman is pretty, well dressed, and self-satisfied enough to be at her ease on the stage, he is delighted; and if she is a walking monument of handsome incompetence, so much the better, as your voluptuary rarely likes a woman to be cleverer than himself, or to force him to feel deeply or think energetically when he only wants to wallow in her good looks. Confront him with an actress who will not condescend to attack him on this side — who takes her work with thorough seriousness and self-respect — and his resentment, his humiliation, his sense of being snubbed, break out ludicrously in his writing, even when he dare not write otherwise than favorably. No dramatist begins by writing plays merely as excuses for the exhibition of pretty women on the stage. He comes to that ultimately perhaps; but at first he does his best to create real characters and make them pass through three acts of real experiences. Bring a critic who has done this face to face with the practical question of selecting an actress for his heroine, and he suddenly realizes for the first time that there is not such a galaxy of talent on the London stage as he thought, and that the handsome walking ladies whom he always thought good enough for other people's plays are not good enough for his own. That is already an immense step in his education. There are other steps, too, which he will have taken before the curtain falls on the first public representation of his play; but they may be summed up in the fact that the author of a play is the only person who really wants to have it well done in every respect, and who therefore has every drawback brought fully home to him. The man who has had that awakening about one play will thenceforth have his eyes open at all other plays; and there you have at once the first moral with the first technical qualification of the critic — the determination to have every play as well done as possible, and the knowledge of what is standing in the way of that consummation. Those of our critics who, either as original dramatists or adapters and translators, have superintended the production of plays with paternal anxiety, are never guilty of the wittily disguised indifference of clever critics who have never seen a drama through from its first beginnings behind the scenes. Compare the genuine excitement of Mr. Clement Scott, or the almost Calvinistic seriousness of Mr. Wm. Archer with the gaily easy what-does-it-matterness of Mr. Walkley, and you see at once how the two critic-dramatists influence the drama, whilst the critic-playgoer only makes it a pretext for entertaining his readers. On the whole there is only as much validity in the theory that a critic should not be a dramatist, as in the theory that a judge should not be a lawyer nor a general a soldier. You cannot have qualifications without experience; and you cannot have experience without personal interest and bias. That may not be an ideal arrangement; but it is the way the world is built; and we must make the best of it.

JOSEPH CONRAD (1857–)

From A PERSONAL RECORD

WITH THE MARSEILLES PILOTS

Shortly before midnight I walked down the quay of the *Vieux Port* to join the pilot-boat of my friends. I knew where she would be waiting for her crew, in the little bit of a canal behind the fort at the entrance of the harbor. The deserted quays looked very white and dry in the moonlight, and as if frost-bound in the sharp air of that December night. A prowler or two slunk by noiselessly; a custom-house guard, soldier-like, a sword by his side, paced close under the bowsprits of the long row of ships moored bows on opposite the long, slightly curved, continuous flat wall of the tall houses that seemed to be one immense abandoned building with innumerable windows shuttered closely. Only here and there a

small, dingy café for sailors cast a yellow gleam on the bluish sheen of the flagstones. Passing by, one heard a deep murmur of voices inside — nothing more. How quiet everything was at the end of the quays on the last night on which I went out for a service cruise as a guest of the Marseilles pilots! Not a footstep, except my own, not a sigh, not a whispering echo of the usual revelry going on in the narrow, unspeakable lanes of the Old Town reached my ear — and suddenly, with a terrific jingling rattle of iron and glass, the omnibus of the Jolliette on its last journey swung round the corner of the dead wall which faced across the paved road the characteristic angular mass of the Fort St. Jean. Three horses trotted abreast, with the clatter of hoofs on the granite setts, and the yellow, uproarious machine jolted violently behind them, fantastic, lighted up, perfectly empty, and with the driver apparently asleep on his swaying perch above that amazing racket. I flattened myself against the wall and gasped. It was a stunning experience. Then after staggering on a few paces in the shadow of the fort, casting a darkness more intense than that of a clouded night upon the canal, I saw the tiny light of a lantern standing on the quay, and became aware of muffled figures making toward it from various directions. Pilots of the Third Company hastening to embark. Too sleepy to be talkative, they step on board in silence. But a few low grunts and an enormous yawn are heard. Somebody even ejaculates: 'Ah! Coquin de sort!' and sighs wearily at his hard fate.

The *patron* of the Third Company (there were five companies of pilots at that time, I believe) is the brother-in-law of my friend Solary (Baptistin), a broad-shouldered, deep-chested man of forty, with a keen, frank glance which always seeks your eyes. He greets me by a low, hearty *'Hé, l'ami. Comment va?'* With his clipped mustache and massive open face, energetic and at the same time placid in expression, he is a fine specimen of the southerner of the calm type. For there is such a type in which the volatile southern passion is transmuted into solid force. He is fair, but no one could mistake him for a man of the north even by the dim gleam of the lantern standing on the quay. He is worth a dozen of your ordinary Normans or Bretons, but then, in the whole immense sweep of the Mediterranean shores, you could not find half a dozen men of his stamp.

Standing by the tiller, he pulls out his watch from under a thick jacket and bends his head over it in the light cast into the boat. Time 's up. His pleasant voice commands, in a quiet undertone, *'Larguez.'* A suddenly projected arm snatches the lantern off the quay — and, warped along by a line at first, then with the regular tug of four heavy sweeps in the bow, the big half-decked boat full of men glides out of the black, breathless shadow of the fort. The open water of the *avant-port* glitters under the moon as if sown over with millions of sequins, and the long white breakwater shines like a thick bar of solid silver. With a quick rattle of blocks and one single silky swish, the sail is filled by a little breeze keen enough to have come straight down from the frozen moon, and the boat, after the clatter of the hauled-in sweeps, seems to stand at rest, surrounded by a mysterious whispering so faint and unearthly that it may be the rustling of the brilliant, overpowering moonrays breaking like a rain-shower upon the hard, smooth, shadowless sea.

I may well remember that last night spent with the pilots of the Third Company. I have known the spell of moonlight since, on various seas and coasts — coasts of forests, of rocks, of sand dunes — but no magic so perfect in its revelation of unsuspected character, as though one were allowed to look upon the mystic nature of material things. For hours I suppose no word was spoken in that boat. The pilots, seated in two rows facing each other, dozed, with their arms folded and their chins resting upon their breasts. They displayed a great variety of caps: cloth, wool, leather, peaks, ear-flaps, tassels, with a picturesque round *béret* or two pulled down over the brows; and one grandfather, with a shaved, bony face and a great beak of a nose, had a cloak with a hood which made him look in our midst like a cowled monk being carried off goodness knows where by that silent company of seamen — quiet enough to be dead.

My fingers itched for the tiller, and in due course my friend, the *patron*, surrendered it in the same spirit in which the family coachman lets a boy hold the reins

on an easy bit of road. There was a great solitude around us; the islets ahead, Monte Cristo and the Chateau d'If in full light, seemed to float toward us — so steady, so imperceptible was the progress of our boat. 'Keep her in the furrow of the moon,' the *patron* directed me, in a quiet murmur, sitting down ponderously in the stern-sheets and reaching for his pipe.

The pilot station in weather like this was only a mile or two to the westward of the islets; and presently, as we approached the spot, the boat we were going to relieve swam into our view suddenly, on her way home, cutting black and sinister into the wake of the moon under a sable wing, while to them our sail must have been a vision of white and dazzling radiance. Without altering the course a hair's breadth we slipped by each other within an oar's length. A drawling, sardonic hail came out of her. Instantly, as if by magic, our dozing pilots got on their feet in a body. An incredible babel of bantering shouts burst out, a jocular, passionate, voluble chatter, which lasted till the boats were stern to stern, theirs all bright now, and, with a shining sail to our eyes, we turned all black to their vision, and drew away from them under a sable wing. That extraordinary uproar died away almost as suddenly as it had begun; first one had enough of it and sat down, then another, then three or four together; and when all had left off with mutters and growling half-laughs the sound of hearty chuckling became audible, persistent, unnoticed. The cowled grandfather was very much entertained somewhere within his hood.

He had not joined in the shouting of jokes, neither had he moved the least bit. He had remained quietly in his place against the foot of the mast. I had been given to understand long before that he had the rating of a second-class able seaman (*matelot lége*r) in the fleet which sailed from Toulon for the conquest of Algeria in the year of grace 1830. And, indeed, I had seen and examined one of the buttons of his old brown, patched coat, the only brass button of the miscellaneous lot, flat and thin, with the words *Equipages de ligne* engraved on it. That sort of button, I believe, went out with the last of the French Bourbons. 'I preserved it from the time of my navy service,' he explained, nodding rapidly his frail, vulture-like head. It was not very likely that he had picked up that relic in the street. He looked certainly old enough to have fought at Trafalgar — or, at any rate, to have played his little part there as a powder-monkey. Shortly after we had been introduced he had informed me in a Franco-Provençal jargon, mumbling tremulously with his toothless jaws, that when he was a 'shaver no higher than that' he had seen the Emperor Napoleon returning from Elba. It was at night, he narrated vaguely, without animation, at a spot between Fréjus and Antibes, in the open country. A big fire had been lit at the side of the cross-roads. The population from several villages had collected there, old and young — down to the very children in arms, because the women had refused to stay at home. Tall soldiers wearing high, hairy caps stood in a circle, facing the people silently, and their stern eyes and big mustaches were enough to make everybody keep at a distance. He, 'being an impudent little shaver,' wriggled out of the crowd, creeping on his hands and knees as near as he dared to the grenadiers' legs, and peeping through discovered, standing perfectly still in the light of the fire, 'a little fat fellow in a three-cornered hat, buttoned up in a long straight coat, with a big, pale face inclined on one shoulder, looking something like a priest. His hands were clasped behind his back. . . . It appears that this was the Emperor,' the ancient commented, with a faint sigh. He was staring from the ground with all his might, when 'my poor father,' who had been searching for his boy frantically everywhere, pounced upon him and hauled him away by the ear.

The tale seems an authentic recollection. He related it to me many times, using the very same words. The grandfather honored me by a special and somewhat embarrassing predilection. Extremes touch. He was the oldest member by a long way in that company, and I was, if I may say so, its temporarily adopted baby. He had been a pilot longer than any man in the boat could remember; thirty — forty years. He did not seem certain himself, but it could be found out, he suggested, in the archives of the Pilot-office. He had been pensioned off years before, but he went out from force of habit; and, as my friend the *patron* of the company once confided

to me in a whisper, 'the old chap did no harm. He was not in the way.' They treated him with rough deference. One and another would address some insignificant remark to him now and again, but nobody really took any notice of what he had to say. He had survived his strength, his usefulness, his very wisdom. He wore long, green, worsted stockings pulled up above the knee over his trousers, a sort of woolen nightcap on his hairless cranium, and wooden clogs on his feet. Without his hooded cloak he looked like a peasant. Half a dozen hands would be extended to help him on board, but afterward he was left pretty much to his own thoughts. Of course he never did any work, except, perhaps, to cast off some rope when hailed, '*Hé, l'Ancien!* let go the halyards there, at your hand'— or some such request of an easy kind.

No one took notice in any way of the chuckling within the shadow of the hood. He kept it up for a long time with intense enjoyment. Obviously he had preserved intact the innocence of mind which is easily amused. But when his hilarity had exhausted itself, he made a professional remark in a self-assertive but quavering voice:

'Can't expect much work on a night like this.'

No one took it up. It was a mere truism. Nothing under canvas could be expected to make a port on such an idle night of dreamy splendor and spiritual stillness. We would have to glide idly to and fro, keeping our station within the appointed bearings, and, unless a fresh breeze sprang up with the dawn, we would land before sunrise on a small islet that, within two miles of us, shone like a lump of frozen moonlight, to 'break a crust and take a pull at the wine bottle.' I was familiar with the procedure. The stout boat emptied of her crowd would nestle her buoyant, capable side against the very rock — such is the perfectly smooth amenity of the classic sea when in a gentle mood. The crust broken and the mouthful of wine swallowed — it was literally no more then that with this abstemious race — the pilots would pass the time stamping their feet on the slabs of sea-salted stone and blowing into their nipped fingers. One or two misanthropists would sit apart, perched on boulders like manlike sea-fowl of solitary habits; the sociably disposed would gossip scandalously in little gesticulating knots; and there would be perpetually one or another of my hosts taking aim at the empty horizon with the long, brass tube of the telescope, a heavy, murderous-looking piece of collective property, everlastingly changing hands with brandishing and leveling movements. Then about noon (it was a short turn of duty — the long turn lasted twenty-four hours) another boatful of pilots would relieve us — and we should steer for the old Phœnician port, dominated, watched over from the ridge of a dust-gray, arid hill by the red-and-white striped pile of the Notre Dame de la Garde.

All this came to pass as I had foreseen in the fullness of my very recent experience. But also something not foreseen by me did happen, something which causes me to remember my last outing with the pilots. It was on this occasion that my hand touched, for the first time, the side of an English ship.

No fresh breeze had come with the dawn, only the steady little draught got a more keen edge on it as the eastern sky became bright and glassy with a clean, colorless light. It was while we were all ashore on the islet that a steamer was picked up by the telescope, a black speck like an insect posed on the hard edge of the offing. She emerged rapidly to her water-line and came on steadily, a slim hull with a long streak of smoke slanting away from the rising sun. We embarked in a hurry, and headed the boat out for our prey, but we hardly moved three miles an hour.

She was a big, high-class cargo-steamer of a type that is to be met on the sea no more — black hull, with low, white superstructures, powerfully rigged with three masts and a lot of yards on the fore; two hands at her enormous wheel — steam steering-gear was not a matter of course in these days — and with them on the bridge three others, bulky in thick blue jackets, ruddy-faced, muffled up, with peak caps — I suppose all her officers. There are ships I have met more than once and known well by sight whose names I have forgotten; but the name of that ship once seen so many years ago in the clear flush of a cold, pale sunrise I have not forgotten. How could I — the first English ship on whose side I ever laid my hand! The name — I read it letter by letter on the

bow — was *James Westoll.* Not very romantic, you will say. The name of a very considerable, well-known, and universally respected ship-owner, I believe. James Westoll! What better name could an honorable hard-working ship have? To me the very grouping of the letters is alive with the romantic feeling of her reality as I saw her floating motionless and borrowing an ideal grace from the austere purity of the light.

We were then very near her and, on a sudden impulse, I volunteered to pull bow in the dinghy which shoved off at once to put the pilot on board while our boat, fanned by the faint air which had attended us all through the night, went on gliding gently past the black, glistening length of the ship. A few strokes brought us alongside, and it was then that, for the very first time in my life, I heard myself addressed in English — the speech of my secret choice, of my future, of long friendships, of the deepest affections, of hours of toil and hours of ease, and of solitary hours, too, of books read, of thoughts pursued, of remembered emotions — of my very dreams! And if (after being thus fashioned by it in that part of me which cannot decay) I dare not claim it aloud as my own, then, at any rate, the speech of my children. Thus small events grow memorable by the passage of time. As to the quality of the address itself I cannot say it was very striking. Too short for eloquence and devoid of all charm of tone, it consisted precisely of the three words 'Look out there!' growled out huskily above my head.

It proceeded from a big fat fellow (he had an obtrusive, hairy double chin) in a blue woolen shirt and roomy breeches pulled up very high, even to the level of his breast-bone, by a pair of braces quite exposed to public view. As where he stood there was no bulwark, but only a rail and stanchions, I was able to take in at a glance the whole of his voluminous person from his feet to the high crown of his soft black hat, which sat like an absurd flanged cone on his big head. The grotesque and massive aspect of that deck-hand (I suppose he was that — very likely the lamp-trimmer) surprised me very much. My course of reading, of dreaming, and longing for the sea had not prepared me for a sea brother of that sort. I never met again a figure in the least like his except in the illustrations to Mr. W. W. Jacobs's most entertaining tales of barges and coasters; but the inspired talent of Mr. Jacobs for poking endless fun at poor, innocent sailors in a prose which, however extravagant in its felicitous invention, is always artistically adjusted to observed truth, was not yet. Perhaps Mr. Jacobs himself was not yet. I fancy that, at most, if he had made his nurse laugh it was about all he had achieved at that early date.

Therefore, I repeat, other disabilities apart, I could not have been prepared for the sight of that husky old porpoise. The object of his concise address was to call my attention to a rope which he incontinently flung down for me to catch. I caught it, though it was not really necessary, the ship having no way on her by that time. Then everything went on very swiftly. The dinghy came with a slight bump against the steamer's side; the pilot, grabbing the rope ladder had scrambled half-way up before I knew that our task of boarding was done; the harsh, muffled clanging of the engine-room telegraph struck my ear through the iron plate; my companion in the dinghy was urging me to 'shove off — push hard'; and when I bore against the smooth flank of the first English ship I ever touched in my life, I felt it already throbbing under my open palm.

Her head swung a little to the west, pointing toward the miniature lighthouse of the Jolliette breakwater, far away there, hardly distinguishable against the land. The dinghy danced a squashy, splashy jig in the wash of the wake; and, turning in my seat, I followed the *James Westoll* with my eyes. Before she had gone in a quarter of a mile she hoisted her flag, as the harbor regulations prescribe for arriving and departing ships. I saw it suddenly flicker and stream out on the flagstaff. The Red Ensign! In the pellucid, colorless atmosphere of that southern land, the livid islets, the sea of pale, glassy blue under the pale, glassy sky of that cold sunrise, it was, as far as the eye could reach, the only spot of ardent color — flame-like, intense, and presently as minute as the tiny red spark the concentrated reflection of a great fire kindles in the clear heart of a globe of crystal. The Red Ensign — the symbolic, protecting, warm bit of bunting flung wide upon the

seas, and destined for so many years to be the only roof over my head.

H. G. WELLS (1866–)

From SOCIAL FORCES IN ENGLAND AND AMERICA

THE CONTEMPORARY NOVEL

It is no new discovery that the novel, like the drama, is a powerful instrument of moral suggestion. This has been understood in England ever since there has been such a thing as a novel in England. This has been recognized equally by novelists, novel-readers, and the people who would n't read novels under any condition whatever. Richardson wrote deliberately for edification, and *Tom Jones* is a powerful and effective appeal for a charitable, and even indulgent, attitude towards loose-living men. But excepting Fielding and one or two other of those partial exceptions that always occur in the case of critical generalizations, there is a definable difference between the novel of the past and what I may call the modern novel. It is a difference that is reflected upon the novel from a difference in the general way of thinking. It lies in the fact that formerly there was a feeling of certitude about moral values and standards of conduct that is altogether absent to-day. It wasn't so much that men were agreed upon these things — about these things there have always been enormous divergences of opinion — as that men were emphatic, cock-sure, and unteachable about whatever they did happen to believe to a degree that no longer obtains. This is the Balfourian age, and even religion seeks to establish itself on doubt. There were, perhaps, just as many differences in the past as there are now, but the outlines were harder — they were, indeed, so hard as to be almost, to our sense, savage. You might be a Roman Catholic, and in that case you did not want to hear about Protestants, Turks, Infidels, except in tones of horror and hatred. You knew exactly what was good and what was evil. Your priest informed you upon these points, and all you needed in any novel you read was a confirmation, implicit or explicit, of these vivid, rather than charming, prejudices. If you were a Protestant you were equally clear and unshakable. Your sect, whichever sect you belonged to, knew the whole of truth and included all the nice people. It had nothing to learn in the world, and it wanted to learn nothing outside its sectarian convictions. The unbelievers, you know, were just as bad, and said their creeds with an equal fury — merely interpolating *nots*. People of every sort — Catholic, Protestant, Infidel, or what not — were equally clear that good was good and bad was bad, that the world was made up of good characters whom you had to love, help and admire, and of bad characters to whom one might, in the interests of goodness, even lie, and whom one had to foil, defeat and triumph over shamelessly at every opportunity. That was the quality of the times. The novel reflected this quality of assurance, and its utmost charity was to unmask an apparent villain and show that he or she was really profoundly and correctly good, or to unmask an apparent saint and show the hypocrite. There was no such penetrating and pervading element of doubt and curiosity — and charity, about the rightfulness and beauty of conduct, such as one meets on every hand to-day.

The novel-reader of the past, therefore, like the novel-reader of the more provincial parts of England to-day, judged a novel by the convictions that had been built up in him by his training and his priest or his pastor. If it agreed with these convictions he approved; if it did not agree he disapproved — often with great energy. The novel, where it was not unconditionally banned altogether as a thing disturbing and unnecessary, was regarded as a thing subordinated to the teaching of the priest or pastor, or whatever director and dogma was followed. Its modest moral confirmations began when authority had completed its direction. The novel was good — if it seemed to harmonize with the graver exercises conducted by Mr. Chadband — and it was bad and outcast if Mr. Chadband said so. And it is over the bodies of discredited and disgruntled Chadbands that the novel escapes from its servitude and inferiority.

Now the conflict of authority against criticism is one of the eternal conflicts of humanity. It is the conflict of organization against initiative, of discipline against

freedom. It was the conflict of the priest against the prophet in ancient Judæa, of the Pharisee against the Nazarene, of the Realist against the Nominalist, of the Church against the Franciscan and the Lollard, of the Respectable Person against the Artist, of the hedgeclippers of mankind against the shooting buds. And to-day, while we live in a period of tightening and extending social organizations, we live also in a period of adventurous and insurgent thought, in an intellectual spring unprecedented in the world's history. There is an enormous criticism going on of the faiths upon which men's lives and associations are based, and of every standard and rule of conduct. And it is inevitable that the novel, just in the measure of its sincerity and ability, should reflect and coöperate in the atmosphere and uncertainties and changing variety of this seething and creative time.

And I do not mean merely that the novel is unavoidably charged with the representation of this wide and wonderful conflict. It is a necessary part of the conflict. The essential characteristic of this great intellectual revolution amidst which we are living to-day, that revolution of which the revival and restatement of nominalism under the name of pragmatism is the philosophical aspect, consists in the reassertion of the importance of the individual instance as against the generalization. All our social, political, moral problems are being approached in a new spirit, in an inquiring and experimental spirit, which has small respect for abstract principles and deductive rules. We perceive more and more clearly, for example, that the study of social organization is an empty and unprofitable study until we approach it as a study of the association and inter-reaction of individualized human beings inspired by diversified motives, ruled by traditions, and swayed by the suggestions of a complex intellectual atmosphere. And all our conceptions of the relationships between man and man, and of justice and rightfulness and social desirableness, remain something misfitting and inappropriate, something uncomfortable and potentially injurious, as if we were trying to wear sharp-edged clothes made for a giant out of tin, until we bring them to the test and measure of realized individualities.

And this is where the value and opportunity of the modern novel comes in. So far as I can see, it is the only medium through which we can discuss the great majority of the problems which are being raised in such bristling multitude by our contemporary social development. Nearly every one of those problems has at its core a psychological problem, and not merely a psychological problem, but one in which the idea of individuality is an essential factor. Dealing with most of these questions by a rule or generalization is like putting a cordon round a jungle full of the most diversified sort of game. The hunting only begins when you leave the cordon behind you and push into the thickets.

Take, for example, the immense cluster of difficulties that arises out of the increasing complexity of our state. On every hand we are creating officials, and compared with only a few years ago the private in a dozen fresh directions comes into contact with officialdom. But we still do practically nothing to work out the interesting changes that occur in this sort of man and that, when you withdraw him as it were from the common crowd of humanity, put his mind if not his body into uniform and endow him with powers and functions and rules. It is manifestly a study of the profoundest public and personal importance. The process of social and political organization that has been going on for the last quarter of a century is pretty clearly going on now if anything with increasing vigor — and for the most part the entire dependence of the consequences of the whole problem upon the reaction between the office on the one hand and the weak, uncertain, various human beings who take office on the other does n't seem even to be suspected by the energetic, virtuous and more or less amiable people whose activities in politics and upon the back stairs of politics bring about these developments. They assume that the sort of official they need, a combination of godlike virtue and intelligence with unfailing mechanical obedience, can be made out of just any young nephew. And I know of no means of persuading people that this is a rather unjustifiable assumption, and of creating an intelligent controlling criticism of officials and of assisting conscientious officials to an effective self-examination, and generally of keeping the atmosphere of official life

sweet and healthy, except the novel. Yet so far the novel has scarcely begun its attack upon this particular field of human life, and all the attractive varied play of motive it contains.

Of course we have one supreme and devastating study of the illiterate minor official in Bumble. That one figure lit up and still lights the whole problem of Poor Law administration for the English reading community. It was a translation of well-meant regulations and pseudo-scientific conceptions of social order into blundering, arrogant, ill-bred flesh and blood. It was worth a hundred Royal Commissions. You may make your regulations as you please, said Dickens in effect; this is one sample of the stuff that will carry them out. But Bumble stands almost alone. Instead of realizing that he is only one aspect of officialdom, we are all too apt to make him the type of all officials, and not an urban district council can get into a dispute about its electric light without being denounced as a Bumbledom by some whirling enemy or other. The burden upon Bumble's shoulders is too heavy to be borne, and we want the contemporary novel to give us a score of other figures to put beside him, other aspects and reflections upon this great problem of officialism made flesh. Bumble is a magnificent figure of the follies and cruelties of ignorance in office — I would have every candidate for the post of workhouse master pass a severe examination upon Oliver Twist — but it is not only caricature and satire I demand. We must have not only the fullest treatment of the temptations, vanities, abuses, and absurdities of office, but all its dreams, its sense of constructive order, its consolations, its sense of service, and its nobler satisfactions. You may say that is demanding more insight and power in our novels and novelists than we can possibly hope to find in them. So much the worse for us. I stick to my thesis that the complicated social organization of to-day cannot get along without the amount of mutual understanding and mutual explanation such a range of characteristics in our novels implies. The success of civilization amounts ultimately to a success of sympathy and understanding. If people cannot be brought to an interest in one another greater than they feel to-day, to curiosities and criticisms far keener, and coöperations far subtler, than we have now; if class cannot be brought to measure itself against, and interchange experience and sympathy with class, and temperament with temperament, then we shall never struggle very far beyond the confused discomforts and uneasiness of to-day, and the changes and complications of human life will remain as they are now, very like the crumplings and separations and complications of an immense avalanche that is sliding down a hill. And in this tremendous work of human reconciliation and elucidation, it seems to me it is the novel that must attempt most and achieve most.

You may feel disposed to say to all this: We grant the major premises, but why look to the work of prose fiction as the main instrument in this necessary process of, so to speak, sympathizing humanity together? Cannot this be done far more effectively through biography and autobiography, for example? Is n't there the lyric; and, above all, is n't there the play? Well, so far as the stage goes, I think it is a very charming and exciting form of human activity, a display of actions and surprises of the most moving and impressive sort; but beyond the opportunity it affords for saying startling and thought-provoking things — opportunities like Mr. Shaw, for example, has worked to the utmost limit — I do not see that the drama does much to enlarge our sympathies and add to our stock of motive ideas. And regarded as a medium for startling and thought-producing things, the stage seems to me an extremely clumsy and costly affair. One might just as well go about with a pencil writing up the thought-provoking phrase, whatever it is, on walls. The drama excites our sympathies intensely, but it seems to me it is far too objective a medium to widen them appreciably, and it is that widening, that increase in the range of understanding, at which I think civilization is aiming. The case for biography, and more particularly autobiography, as against the novel, is, I admit, at the first blush stronger. You may say: Why give us these creatures of a novelist's imagination, these phantom and fantastic thinkings and doings, when we may have the histories of real lives, really lived — the intimate record of actual men and women? To which one answers: 'Ah, if one could!' But it is

just because biography does deal with actual lives, actual facts, because it radiates out to touch continuing interests and sensitive survivors, that it is so unsatisfactory, so untruthful. Its inseparable falsehood is the worst of all kinds of falsehood — the falsehood of omission. Think what an abounding, astonishing, perplexing person Gladstone must have been in life, and consider Lord Morley's *Life of Gladstone,* cold, dignified — not a life at all, indeed, so much as embalmed remains; the fire gone, the passions gone, the bowels carefully removed. All biography has something of that post-mortem coldness and respect, and as for autobiography — a man may show his soul in a thousand half-unconscious ways, but to turn upon oneself and explain oneself is given to no one. It is the natural liars and braggarts, your Cellinis and Casanovas, men with a habit of regarding themselves with a kind of objective admiration, who do best in autobiography. And, on the other hand, the novel has neither the intense self-consciousness of autobiography nor the paralyzing responsibilities of the biographer. It is by comparison irresponsible and free. Because its characters are figments and phantoms, they can be made entirely transparent. Because they are fictions, and you know they are fictions, so that they cannot hold you for an instant as soon as they cease to be true, they have a power of veracity beyond that of actual records. Every novel carries its own justification and its own condemnation in its success or failure to convince you that *the thing was so.* Now history, biography, blue-book, and so forth, can hardly ever get beyond the statement that the superficial fact was so.

You see now the scope of the claim I am making for the novel; it is to be the social mediator, the vehicle of understanding, the instrument of self-examination, the parade of morals and the exchange of manners, the factory of customs, the criticism of laws and institutions and of social dogmas and ideas. It is to be the home confessional, the initiator of knowledge, the seed of fruitful self-questioning. Let me be very clear here. I do not mean for a moment that the novelist is to set up as a teacher, as a sort of priest with a pen, who will make men and women believe and do this and that. The novel is not a new sort of pulpit; humanity is passing out of the phase when men *sit under* preachers and dogmatic influences. But the novelist is going to be the most potent of artists, because he is going to present conduct, devise beautiful conduct, discuss conduct, analyze conduct, suggest conduct, illuminate it through and through. He will not teach, but discuss, point out, plead, and display. And this being my view you will be prepared for the demand I am now about to make for an absolutely free hand for the novelist in his choice of topic and incident and in his method of treatment; or, rather, if I may presume to speak for other novelists, I would say it is not so much a demand we make as an intention we proclaim. We are going to write, subject only to our limitations, about the whole of human life. We are going to deal with political questions and religious questions and social questions. We cannot present people unless we have this free hand, this unrestricted field. What is the good of telling stories about people's lives if one may not deal freely with the religious beliefs and organizations that have controlled or failed to control them? What is the good of pretending to write about love, and the loyalties and treacheries and quarrels of men and women, if one must not glance at those varieties of physical temperament and organic quality, those deeply passionate needs and distresses from which half the storms of human life are brewed? We mean to deal with all these things and it will need very much more than the disapproval of provincial librarians, the hostility of a few influential people in London, the scurrility of one paper, and the deep and obstinate silences of another, to stop the incoming tide of aggressive novel-writing. We are going to write about it all. We are going to write about business and finance and politics and precedence and pretentiousness and decorum and indecorum, until a thousand pretenses and ten thousand impostures shrivel in the cold, clear air of our elucidations. We are going to write of wasted opportunities and latent beauties until a thousand new ways of living open to men and women. We are going to appeal to the young and the hopeful and the curious, against the established, the dignified, and defensive. Before we have done, we will have all life within the scope of the novel.

JOHN GALSWORTHY (1867–)

From A COMMENTARY

THE LOST DOG

It was the first October frost. Outside a half-built house, before a board on which was written, 'Jolly Bros., Builders,' I saw a man, whose eyes seemed saying: 'In the winter building will stop; if I am homeless and workless now, what shall I be in two months' time?' Turning to me he said: 'Can you give me a job, Sir? I don't mind what I do.'

His face was in mourning for a shave, his clothes were very ragged, and he was so thin that there seemed hardly any man behind those ragged clothes. He smelt, not indeed of whisky, but as though bereaved of it; and his blue and watery eyes were like those of a lost dog.

We looked at each other, and this conversation passed between our eyes:

'What are you? Where did you work last? How did you get into this condition? Are you married? How many children? Why don't you apply to the proper authorities? I have money, and you have none; it is my right to ask these questions.'

'I am a lost dog.'

'But I have no work for you; if you are really hungry I can give you sixpence; I can also refer you to a Society who will examine your affairs, but if they find you a man for whom life has been too much, they will tell me so, and warn me not to help you. Is that what you want?'

'I am a lost dog.'

'I dare say; but what can I do? I can't make work! I know nothing about you, I dare n't recommend you to my friends. No man gets into the condition you are in without the aid of his own folly. You say you fell ill; yes, but you all say that. Why could n't you look ahead and save some money? You see now that you ought to have? And yet you come to me! I have a great many calls — societies, old people, and the sick; the rates are very high — you know that — partly on your account!'

'I am a lost dog.'

'Ah! but I am told daily by the just, the orderly, the practical, who have never been lost or hungry, that I must not give to casuals. You know yourself it would be pure sentiment; you know yourself it would be mere luxury. I wonder you can ask me!'

'I am a lost dog.'

'You have said that before. It 's not as if I did n't know you! I have seen and talked with you — with dozens of you. I have found you asleep on the Thames Embankment. I have given you sixpence when you were shambling empty away after running a mile behind a cab. One night, don't you remember, in the Cromwell Road — well, not you, but your twin brother — we talked together in the rain, and the wind blew your story against the shuttered windows of the tall, closed houses. Once you were with me quite six weeks, cutting up a dead tree in my garden. Day after day you sat there, working very slowly to keep the tree from coming to an end, and showing me in gratitude each morning your waistbelt filling out. With the saw in your hand and your weak smile you would look at me, and your eyes would say: "You don't know what a rest it is for me to come here and cut up wood all day." At all events, you *must* remember how you kept yourself from whisky until I went away, and how you excused yourself when I returned and found you speaking thickly in the morning: "I can't *help* rememberin' things!" It was not you, you say? No; it was your double.'

'I am a lost dog.'

'Yes, yes, yes! You are one of those men that our customs breed. You had no business to be born — or at any rate you should have seen to it that you were born in the upper classes. What right had you to imagine you could ever tackle the working-man's existence — up to the mark all day and every day? You, a man with a soft spot? You knew, or your parents ought to have known, that you could n't stand more than a certain pressure from life. You are diseased, if not physically, then in your disposition. Am I to excuse you because of that? Most probably I should be the same if life pressed hard enough. Am I to excuse myself because of that? Never — until it happens! Being what you are you chose deliberately — or was it chosen for you? — to run the risks of being born; and now you complain of the consequences, and come to me for help? To me — who may myself

at some time be in need, if not of physical, of moral bread? Is it right, or reasonable?'

'I am a lost dog.'

'You are getting on my nerves! Your chin is weak — I can see that through your beard; your eyes are wistful, not like the professional beggar's pebbly eyes; you have a shuffling walk, due perhaps a little to the nature of your boots; yes, there are all the marks of amiability about you. Can you look me in the face and say it would be the slightest use to put you on your legs and thrust you again, equipped, into the ranks of battle? Can you, now? Ah! if you could only get some clothes on you, and some work to do! But don't you know that, three weeks hence, that work would be lost, those clothes in pawn, and you be on the drink? Why should I waste my charity on *you* — "the deserving" are so many! There's "something against you" too? Oh! nothing much — you're not the sort that makes a criminal; if you were you would not be in such a state. You would be glad enough to do your fellows a good turn yourself; and you are not ungrateful, you would attach yourself to any one who showed you kindness. But you are hopeless, hopeless, hopeless — are n't you now?'

'I am a lost dog.'

'You know our methods with lost dogs? Have you never heard of the lethal chamber? A real tramp, living from hand to mouth in sun and rain and dirt and rags, enjoys his life. But *you* don't enjoy the state you're in. You're afraid of the days when you've nothing to eat, afraid of the nights when you've nowhere to sleep, afraid of crime, afraid even of this begging; twice since we've been standing here I've seen you looking round. If you knew you'd be afraid like this, what made you first desert the narrow path? Something came over you? How could you let it come like that? It still comes over you? You were tired, you wanted something new — something a little new. We all want that something, friend, and get it if we can; but we can't recognize that *your* sort of human creature is entitled, for you see what's come of it?'

'I am a lost dog.'

'You say that as if you thought there were one law for the rich and another for the poor. You are making a mistake. If I am had up for begging as well as you, we shall both of us go to prison. The fact that I have no need to steal or beg, can pay for getting drunk and taking holidays, is hardly to the point — you must see that! Do not be led away by sentimental talk; if we appear before a judge, we both must suffer punishment. I am not so likely to appear as you perhaps, but that's an accident. No, please don't say that dreadful thing again! I wish to help you. There is Canada, but they don't want you. I would send you anywhere to stop your eyes from haunting me, but they don't want you. Where do they want you? Tell me, and you shall go.'

'I am a lost dog.'

'You remind me of that white shadow with little liver spots that my spaniel dog and I picked up one night when we were going home.

'"Master," he said, "there's such an amusing cur out there in the middle of the road."

'"Behave yourself! Don't pick up with anything you come across like this!"

'"Master, I know it is a thin and dirty cur, but the creature follows me."

'"Keep to heel! The poor dog will get lost if you entice him far from home."

'"Oh, master! that's just what's so amusing. He has n't any."

'And like a little ghost the white dog crept along behind. We took him home — and how he ate, and how he drank! But my spaniel said to me:

'"Master, what is the use of bringing in a dog like this? Can't you see what he is like? He has eaten all my meat, drunk my bowl dry, and now he is sleeping in my bed."

'I said to him: "My dear, you ought to like to give this up to this poor dog."

'And he said to me: "Master, I *don't!* He is no good, this dog; I am cleaner and fatter than he. And don't you know there's a place the other side of the water for all this class of dog? When are we going to take him there?"

'And I said to him: "My dear, don't ask me; *I don't know.*" . . .

'And you are like that dog, standing there with those eyes of yours and that weak chin and those weak knees, before this half-built house with the winter coming on. And I am like my spaniel, who knows there is a proper place for all your

kind of creature. Man! what shall I do with you?'

'I am a lost dog.'

GILBERT K. CHESTERTON (1873–)

From A SHORT HISTORY OF ENGLAND

THE RETURN OF THE BARBARIAN

The only way to write a popular history, as we have already remarked, would be to write it backwards. It would be to take common objects of our own street and tell of how each of them came to be in the street at all. And for my immediate purpose it is really convenient to take two objects we have known all our lives, as features of fashion or respectability. One, which has grown rarer recently, is what we call a top-hat; the other, which is still a customary formality, is a pair of trousers. The history of these humorous objects really does give a clue to what has happened in England for the last hundred years. It is not necessary to be an æsthete in order to regard both objects as the reverse of beautiful, as tested by what may be called the rational side of beauty. The lines of human limbs can be beautiful, and so can the lines of loose drapery, but not cylinders too loose to be the first and too tight to be the second. Nor is a subtle sense of harmony needed to see that while there are hundreds of differently proportioned hats, a hat that actually grows larger towards the top is somewhat top-heavy. But what is largely forgotten is this, that these two fantastic objects, which now strike the eye as unconscious freaks, were originally conscious freaks. Our ancestors, to do them justice, did not think them casual or commonplace; they thought them, if not ridiculous, at least rococo. The top-hat was the topmost point of a riot of Regency dandyism, and bucks wore trousers while business men were still wearing knee-breeches. It will not be fanciful to see a certain oriental touch in trousers, which the later Romans also regarded as effeminately oriental; it was an oriental touch found in many florid things of the time — in Byron's poems or Brighton Pavilion. Now, the interesting point is that for a whole serious century these instantaneous phantasies have remained like fossils. In the carnival of the Regency a few fools got into fancy dress, and we have all remained in fancy dress. At least, we have remained in the dress, though we have lost the fancy.

I say this is typical of the most important thing that happened in the Victorian time. For the most important thing was that nothing happened. The very fuss that was made about minor modifications brings into relief the rigidity with which the main lines of social life were left as they were at the French Revolution. We talk of the French Revolution as something that changed the world; but its most important relation to England is that it did not change England. A student of our history is concerned rather with the effect it did not have than the effect it did. If it be a splendid fate to have survived the Flood, the English oligarchy had that added splendour. But even for the countries in which the Revolution was a convulsion, it was the last convulsion — until that which shakes the world to-day. It gave their character to all the commonwealths, which all talked about progress, and were occupied in marking time. Frenchmen, under all superficial reactions, remained republican in spirit, as they had been when they first wore top-hats. Englishmen, under all superficial reforms, remained oligarchical in spirit, as they had been when they first wore trousers. Only one power might be said to be growing, and that in a plodding and prosaic fashion — the power in the North-East whose name was Prussia. And the English were more and more learning that this growth need cause them no alarm, since the North Germans were their cousins in blood and their brothers in spirit.

The first thing to note, then, about the nineteenth century is that Europe remained herself as compared with the Europe of the great war, and that England especially remained herself as compared even with the rest of Europe. Granted this, we may give their proper importance to the cautious internal changes in this country, the small conscious and the large unconscious changes. Most of the con-

scious ones were much upon the model of an early one, the great Reform Bill of 1832, and can be considered in the light of it. First, from the standpoint of most real reformers, the chief thing about the Reform Bill was that it did not reform. It had a huge tide of popular enthusiasm behind it, which wholly disappeared when the people found themselves in front of it. It enfranchised large masses of the middle classes; it disfranchised very definite bodies of the working classes; and it so struck the balance between the conservative and the dangerous elements in the commonwealth that the governing class was much stronger than before. The date, however, is important, not at all because it was the beginning of democracy, but because it was the beginning of the best way ever discovered of evading and postponing democracy. Here enters the homœopathic treatment of revolution, since so often successful. Well into the next generation Disraeli, the brilliant Jewish adventurer who was the symbol of the English aristocracy being no longer genuine, extended the franchise to the artisans, partly, indeed, as a party move against his great rival, Gladstone, but more as the method by which the old popular pressure was first tired out and then toned down. The politicians said the working-class was now strong enough to be allowed votes. It would be truer to say it was now weak enough to be allowed votes. So in more recent times Payment of Members, which would once have been regarded (and resisted) as an inrush of popular forces, was passed quietly and without resistance, and regarded merely as an extension of parliamentary privileges. The truth is that the old parliamentary oligarchy abandoned their first line of trenches because they had by that time constructed a second line of defense. It consisted in the concentration of colossal political funds in the private and irresponsible power of the politicians, collected by the sale of peerages and more important things, and expended on the gerrymandering of the enormously expensive elections. In the presence of this inner obstacle a vote became about as valuable as a railway ticket when there is a permanent block on the line. The façade and outward form of this new secret government is the merely mechanical application of what is called the Party System. The Party System does not consist, as some suppose, of two parties, but of one. If there were two real parties, there could be no system.

But if this was the evolution of parliamentary reform, as represented by the first Reform Bill, we can see the other side of it in the social reform attacked immediately after the first Reform Bill. It is a truth that should be a tower and a landmark, that one of the first things done by the Reform Parliament was to establish those harsh and dehumanized workhouses which both honest Radicals and honest Tories branded with the black title of the New Bastille. This bitter name lingers in our literature, and can be found by the curious in the works of Carlyle and Hood, but it is doubtless interesting rather as a note of contemporary indignation than as a correct comparison. It is easy to imagine the logicians and the legal orators of the parliamentary school of progress finding many points of differentiation and even of contrast. The Bastille was one central institution; the workhouses have been many, and have everywhere transformed local life with whatever they have to give of social sympathy and inspiration. Men of high rank and great wealth were frequently sent to the Bastille, but no such mistake has ever been made by the more business administration of the workhouse. Over the most capricious operations of the *Lettres de Cachets* there still hovered some hazy traditional idea that a man is put in prison to punish him for something. It was a discovery of a later social science that men who cannot be punished can still be imprisoned. But the deepest and most decisive difference lies in the better fortune of the New Bastille, for no mob has ever dared to storm it, and it never fell.

The new Poor Law was indeed not wholly new in the sense that it was the culmination and clear enunciation of a principle foreshadowed in the earlier Poor Law of Elizabeth, which was one of the many anti-popular effects of the Great Pillage. When the monasteries were swept away and the medieval system of hospitality destroyed, tramps and beggars became a problem, the solution of which has always tended towards

slavery, even when the question of slavery has been cleared of the irrelevant question of cruelty. It is obvious that a desperate man might find Mr. Bumble and the Board of Guardians less cruel than cold weather and the bare ground — even if he were allowed to sleep on the ground, which (by a veritable nightmare of nonsense and injustice) he is not. He is actually punished for sleeping under a bush on the specific and stated ground that he cannot afford a bed. It is obvious, however, that he may find his best physical good by going into the workhouse, as he often found it in pagan times by selling himself into slavery. The point is that the solution remains servile, even when Mr. Bumble and the Board of Guardians ceased to be in common sense cruel. The pagan might have the luck to sell himself to a kind master. The principle of the new Poor Law, which has so far proved permanent in our society, is that the man lost all his civic rights and lost them solely through poverty. There is a touch of irony, though hardly of mere hypocrisy, in the fact that the Parliament which effected this reform had just been abolishing black slavery by buying out the slave-owners in the British colonies. The slave-owners were bought out at a price big enough to be called blackmail, but it would be misunderstanding the national mentality to deny the sincerity of the sentiment. Wilberforce represented in this the real wave of Wesleyan religion which had made a humane reaction against Calvinism, and was in no mean sense philanthropic. But there is something romantic in the English mind which can always see what is remote. It is the strongest example of what men lose by being long-sighted. It is fair to say that they gain many things also, the poems that are like adventures and the adventures that are like poems. It is a national savor, and therefore in itself neither good nor evil, and it depends on the application whether we find a scriptural text for it in the wish to take the wings of the morning and abide in the uttermost parts of the sea, or merely in the saying that the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth.

Anyhow, the unconscious nineteenth-century movement, so slow that it seems stationary, was altogether in this direction, of which workhouse philanthropy is the type. Nevertheless, it had one national institution to combat and overcome; one institution all the more intensely national because it was not official, and in a sense not even political. The modern Trade Union was the inspiration and creation of the English; it is still largely known throughout Europe by its English name. It was the English expression of the European effort to resist the tendency of Capitalism to reach its natural culmination in slavery. In this it has an almost weird psychological interest, for it is a return to the past by men ignorant of the past, like the subconscious action of some man who has lost his memory. We say that history repeats itself, and it is even more interesting when it unconsciously repeats itself. No man on earth is kept so ignorant of the Middle Ages as the British workman, except perhaps the British business man who employs him, yet all who know even a little of the Middle Ages can see that the modern Trade Union is a groping for the ancient Guild. It is true that those who look to the Trade Union, and even those clear-sighted enough to call it the Guild, are often without the faintest tinge of medieval mysticism, or even of medieval morality. But this fact is itself the most striking and even staggering tribute to medieval morality. It has all the clinching logic of coincidence. If large numbers of the most hardheaded atheists had evolved, out of their own inner consciousness, the notion that a number of bachelors or spinsters ought to live together in celibate groups for the good of the poor, or the observation of certain hours and offices, it would be a very strong point in favor of the monasteries. It would be all the stronger if the atheists had never heard of monasteries; it would be strongest of all if they hated the very name of monasteries. And it is all the stronger because the man who puts his trust in Trades Unions does not call himself a Catholic or even a Christian, if he does call himself a Guild Socialist.

The Trade Union movement passed through many perils, including a ludicrous attempt of certain lawyers to condemn as a criminal conspiracy that Trade Union solidarity of which their own profession is the strongest and most startling example in the world. The struggle culminated in gigantic strikes which split the coun-

try in every direction in the earlier part of the twentieth century. But another process, with much more power at its back, was also in operation. The principle represented by the new Poor Law proceeded in its course, and in one important respect altered its course, though it can hardly be said to have altered its object. It can most correctly be stated by saying that the employers themselves, who already organized business, began to organize social reform. It was more picturesquely expressed by a cynical aristocrat in Parliament who said, "We are all Socialists now." The Socialists, a body of completely sincere men led by several conspicuously brilliant men, had long hammered into their heads the hopeless sterility of mere non-interference in exchange. The Socialists proposed that the State should not merely interfere in business but should take over the business, and pay all men as equal wage-earners, or at any rate as wage-earners. The employers were not willing to surrender their own position to the State, and this project has largely faded from politics; but the wiser of them were willing to pay better wages, and they were specially willing to bestow various other benefits so long as they were bestowed after the manner of wages. Thus we had a series of social reforms which, for good or evil, all tended in the same direction; the permission to employees to claim certain advantages *as* employees, and as something permanently different from employers. Of these the obvious examples were Employers' Liability, Old Age Pensions, and, as marking another and more decisive stride in the process, the Insurance Act.

The latter in particular, and the whole plan of the social reform in general, were modeled upon Germany. Indeed the whole English life of this period was overshadowed by Germany. We had now reached, for good or evil, the final fulfilment of that gathering influence which began to grow on us in the seventeenth century, which was solidified by the military alliances of the eighteenth century, and which in the nineteenth century had been turned into a philosophy — not to say a mythology. German metaphysics had thinned our theology, so that many a man's most solemn conviction about Good Friday was that Friday was named after Freya. German history had simply annexed English history, so that it was almost counted the duty of any patriotic Englishman to be proud of being a German. The genius of Carlyle, the culture preached by Matthew Arnold, would not, persuasive as they were, have alone produced this effect but for an external phenomenon of great force. Our internal policy was transformed by our foreign policy; and foreign policy was dominated by the more and more drastic steps which the Prussian, now clearly the prince of all the German tribes, was taking to extend the German influence in the world. Denmark was robbed of two provinces; France was robbed of two provinces; and though the fall of Paris was felt almost everywhere as the fall of the capital of civilization, a thing like the sacking of Rome by the Goths, many of the most influential people in England still saw nothing in it but the solid success of our kinsmen and old allies of Waterloo. The moral methods which achieved it, the juggling with the Augustenberg claim, the forgery of the Ems telegram, were either successfully concealed or were but cloudily appreciated. The Higher Criticism had entered into our ethics as well as our theology. Our view of Europe was also distorted and made disproportionate by the accident of a natural concern for Constantinople and our route to India, which led Palmerston and later premiers to support the Turk and see Russia as the only enemy. This somewhat cynical reaction was summed up in the strange figure of Disraeli, who made a pro-Turkish settlement full of his native indifference to the Christian subjects of Turkey, and sealed it at Berlin in the presence of Bismarck. Disraeli was not without insight into the inconsistencies and illusions of the English; he said many sagacious things about them, and one especially when he told the Manchester School that their motto was "Peace and Plenty amid a starving people, and with the world in arms." But what he said about peace and plenty might well be parodied as a comment on what he himself said about Peace with Honor. Returning from that Berlin Conference he should have said, "I bring you Peace with Honor; peace with the seeds of the most horrible war of history; and honor as the dupes and victims of the old bully in Berlin."

But it was, as we have seen, especially in social reform that Germany was believed to be leading the way, and to have found the secret of dealing with the economic evil. In the case of Insurance, which was the test case, she was applauded for obliging all her workmen to set apart a portion of their wages for any time of sickness; and numerous other provisions, both in Germany and England, pursued the same ideal, which was that of protecting the poor against themselves. It everywhere involved an external power having a finger in the family pie; but little attention was paid to any friction thus caused, for all prejudices against the process were supposed to be the growth of ignorance. And that ignorance was already being attacked by what was called education — an enterprise also inspired largely by the example, and partly by the commercial competition of Germany. It was pointed out that in Germany governments and great employers thought it well worth their while to apply the grandest scale of organization and the minutest inquisition of detail to the instruction of the whole German race. The government was the stronger for training its scholars as it trained its soldiers; the big businesses were the stronger for manufacturing mind as they manufactured material. English education was made compulsory; it was made free; many good, earnest, and enthusiastic men labored to create a ladder of standards and examinations, which would connect the cleverest of the poor with the culture of the English universities and the current teaching in history or philosophy. But it cannot be said that the connection was very complete, or the achievement so thorough as the German achievement. For whatever reason, the poor Englishman remained in many things much as his fathers had been, and seemed to think the Higher Criticism too high for him even to criticize.

And then a day came, and if we were wise, we thanked God that we had failed. Education, if it had ever really been in question, would doubtless have been a noble gift: education in the sense of the central tradition of history, with its freedom, its family honor, its chivalry which is the flower of Christendom. But what would our populace, in our epoch, have actually learned if they had learned all that our schools and universities had to teach? That England was but a little branch on a large Teutonic tree; that an unfathomable spiritual sympathy, all-encircling like the sea, had always made us the natural allies of the great folk by the flowing Rhine; that all light came from Luther and Lutheran Germany, whose science was still purging Christianity of its Greek and Roman accretions; that Germany was a forest fated to grow; that France was a dung-heap fated to decay — a dung-heap with a crowing cock on it. What would the ladder of education have led to, except a platform on which a posturing professor proved that a cousin german was the same as a German cousin! What would the guttersnipe have learnt as a graduate, except to embrace a Saxon because he was the other half of an Anglo-Saxon? The day came, and the ignorant fellow found he had other things to learn. And he was quicker than his educated countrymen, for he had nothing to unlearn.

He in whose honor all had been said and sung stirred, and stepped across the border of Belgium. Then were spread out before men's eyes all the beauties of his culture and all the benefits of his organization; then we beheld under a lifting daybreak what light we had followed and after what image we had labored to refashion ourselves. Nor in any story of mankind has the irony of God chosen the foolish things so catastrophically to confound the wise. For the common crowd of poor and ignorant Englishmen, because they only knew that they were Englishmen, burst through the filthy cobwebs of four hundred years and stood where their fathers stood when they knew that they were Christian men. The English poor, broken in every revolt, bullied by every fashion, long despoiled of property, and now being despoiled of liberty, entered history with a noise of trumpets, and turned themselves in two years into one of the iron armies of the world. And when the critic of politics and literature, feeling that this war is after all heroic, looks around him to find the hero, he can point to nothing but the mob.

LATER VICTORIAN AND CONTEMPORARY LYRICS

The later nineteenth century produced no poets of sufficient distinction to fill the places left vacant by Tennyson and Browning or even to reach to the eminences still occupied by Swinburne and Meredith; but, nevertheless, just before and after the beginning of the present era a considerable body of poetry was written which will hold a permanent and honorable place in the great record of English literature. The individuality of the poets is as strongly marked as that of the prose writers, and it would be hard to trace any characteristics as common to all. Among much excellent workmanship and remarkable felicity of phrasing, variety of expression is as noteworthy as a wide range of divergence in subjects treated and ideas presented. While some aim at a perfection of form almost classic in its self-restraint, others gain their effects by abruptness, irregularity and intentional disregard of poetic convention and tradition. The examples given below, necessarily restricted by lack of space and other considerations, still afford some suggestion of the characteristic themes chosen by each poet, his individual point of view and mode of expression. Along with these should be read the 'Poems of the Great War' which are, for convenience of classification, placed under a separate heading.

ROBERT BRIDGES (1844–)

THE GROWTH OF LOVE

(SONNET NO. 50)

The world comes not to an end: her city-hives
Swarm with the tokens of a changeless trade,
With rolling wheel, driver and flagging jade,
Rich men and beggars, children, priests and wives.
New homes on old are set, as lives on lives;
Invention with invention overlaid:
But still or tool or toy or book or blade
Shaped for the hand, that holds and toils and strives.

The men to-day toil as their fathers taught,
With little better'd means; for works depend
On works and overlap, and thought on thought:
And thro' all change the smiles of hope amend
The weariest face, the same love changed in nought:
In this thing too the world comes not to an end.

MOONLIGHT

May Marigold is frolic,
  She laughs till summer is done;
She hears the Grillie chirping
  All day i' the blazing sun.
But when the pale moon rises,
  She fain her face would hide;
For the high Queen of sorrows
  Disdains her empty pride.

Fair Primrose haunts the shadow
  With children of the Spring,
Till in the bloomy woodland
  The nightingale will sing.
And when he lauds the May-night
  And spirits throng the grove,
The moon shines thro' the branches
  And floods her heart with love.

ALICE MEYNELL (1848–)

PARTED

Farewell to one now silenced quite,
Sent out of hearing, out of sight,—
  My friend of friends, whom I shall miss,—
  He is not banished, though, for this,—
Nor he, nor sadness, nor delight.

Though I shall talk with him no more,
A low voice sounds upon the shore.
  He must not watch my resting-place,
  But who shall drive a mournful face
From the sad winds about my door?

I shall not hear his voice complain,
But who shall stop the patient rain?

His tears must not disturb my heart,
But who shall change the years, and part
The world from every thought of pain?

Although my life is left so dim,
The morning crowns the mountain-rim;
Joy is not gone from summer skies,
Nor innocence from children's eyes,
And all these things are part of him.

He is not banished, for the showers
Yet wake this green warm earth of ours.
How can the summer but be sweet?
I shall not have him at my feet
And yet my feet are on the flowers.

THE LADY POVERTY

The Lady Poverty was fair:
But she has lost her looks of late,
With change of times and change of air.
Ah, slattern! she neglects her hair,
Her gown, her shoes: she keeps no state
As once when her pure feet were bare.

Or — almost worse, if worse can be —
She scolds in parlors, dusts and trims,
Watches and counts. Oh, is this she
Whom Francis met, whose step was free
Who with obedience carolled hymns,
In Umbria walked with Chastity?

Where is her ladyhood? Not here,
Not among modern kinds of men;
But in the stony fields, where clear
Through the thin trees the skies appear,
In delicate spare soil and fen,
And slender landscape and austere.

THE SHEPHERDESS

She walks — the lady of my delight —
A shepherdess of sheep.
Her flocks are thoughts. She keeps them white;
She guards them from the steep;
She feeds them on the fragrant height,
And folds them in for sleep.

She roams maternal hills and bright,
Dark valleys safe and deep.
Into that tender breast at night
The chastest stars may peep.
She walks — the lady of my delight —
A shepherdess of sheep.

She holds her little thoughts in sight,
Though gay they run and leap.
She is so circumspect and right;
She has her soul to keep.
She walks — the lady of my delight —
A shepherdess of sheep.

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY
(1849–1903)

OUT OF THE NIGHT THAT COVERS ME

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from Pole to Pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud;
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll:
I am the master of my fate;
I am the captain of my soul.

PRO REGE NOSTRO

What have I done for you,
England, my England?
What is there I would not do,
England, my own?
With your glorious eyes austere,
As the Lord were walking near,
Whispering terrible things and dear
As the song on your bugles blown,
England —
Round the world on your bugles blown!

Where shall the watchful Sun,
England, my England,
Match the master-work you've done,
England, my own?
When shall he rejoice agen
Such a breed of mighty men

As come forward, one to ten,
  As the song on your bugles blown,
    England —
Round the world on your bugles blown!

Ever the faith endures,
  England, my England: —
'Take and break us: we are yours,
  England, my own!
Life is good, and joy runs high
Between English earth and sky:
Death is death; but we shall die
  To the Song on your bugles blown,
    England —
  To the stars on your bugles blown!'

They call you proud and hard,
  England, my England:
You with worlds to watch and ward,
  England, my own!
You whose mailed hand keeps the keys
Of such teeming destinies,
You could know nor dread nor ease,
  Were the Song on your bugles blown,
    England —
  Round the Pit on your bugles blown!

Mother of Ships whose might,
  England, my England,
Is the fierce old Sea's delight,
  England, my own,
Chosen daughter of the Lord,
Spouse-in-Chief of the ancient Sword,
There 's the menace of the Word
  In the Song on your bugles blown,
    England —
  Out of heaven on your bugles blown!

SIR WILLIAM WATSON (1856–)

WORDSWORTH'S GRAVE

II

Poet who sleepest by this wandering wave!
  When thou wast born, what birth-gift hadst thou then?
To thee what wealth was that the Immortals gave,
  The wealth thou gavest in thy turn to men?

Not Milton's keen, translunar music thine;
  Not Shakespeare's cloudless, boundless human view;
Not Shelley's flush of rose on peaks divine;
  Nor yet the wizard twilight Coleridge knew.

What hadst thou that could make so large amends
  For all thou hadst not and thy peers possessed,
Motion and fire, swift means to radiant ends? —
  Thou hadst, for weary feet, the gift of rest.

From Shelley's dazzling glow or thunderous haze,
  From Byron's tempest-anger, tempest-mirth,
Men turned to thee and found — not blast and blaze,
  Tumult of tottering heavens, but peace on earth.

Nor peace that grows by Lethe, scentless flower,
  There in white languors to decline and cease;
But peace whose names are also rapture, power,
  Clear sight, and love: for these are parts of peace.

JOHN DAVIDSON (1857–1909)

THIRTY BOB A WEEK

I could n't touch a stop and turn a screw,
  And set the blooming world a-work for me,
Like such as cut their teeth — I hope, like you —
  On the handle of a skeleton gold key;
I cut mine on a leek, which I eat it every week;
  I 'm a clerk at thirty bob as you can see.

But I don't allow it 's luck and all a toss;
  There 's no such thing as being starred and crossed;
It 's just the power of some to be a boss,
  And the bally power of others to be bossed:
I face the music, sir; you bet I ain't a cur;
  Strike me lucky if I don't believe I 'm lost!

For like a mole I journey in the dark,
  A-traveling along the underground

From my Pillar'd Halls and broad Suburban Park,
To come the daily dull official round;
And home again at night with my pipe all alight,
A-scheming how to count ten bob a pound.

And it 's often very cold and wet,
And my missis stitches towels for a hunks;
And the Pillar'd Halls is half of it to let —
Three rooms about the size of traveling trunks.
And we cough, my wife and I, to dislocate a sigh,
When the noisy little kids are in their bunks.

But you never hear her do a growl or whine,
For she 's made of flint and roses, very odd;
And I 've got to cut my meaning rather fine,
Or I 'd blubber, for I 'm made of greens and sod:
So p'r'aps we are in Hell for all that I can tell,
And lost and damn'd and served up hot to God.

I ain't blaspheming, Mr. Silver-tongue;
I 'm saying things a bit beyond your art:
Of all the rummy starts you ever sprung,
Thirty bob a week 's the rummiest start!
With your science and your books and your theories about spooks,
Did you ever hear of looking in your heart?

I did n't mean your pocket, Mr., no:
I mean that having children and a wife,
With thirty bob on which to come and go,
Is n't dancing to the tabor and the fife:
When it does n't make you drink, by Heaven! it makes you think,
And notice curious items about life.

I step into my heart and there I meet
A god-almighty devil singing small,
Who would like to shout and whistle in the street,
And squelch the passers flat against the wall;
If the whole world was a cake he had the power to take,
He would take it, ask for more, and eat them all.

And I meet a sort of simpleton beside,
The kind that life is always giving beans;
With thirty bob a week to keep a bride
He fell in love and married in his teens:
At thirty bob he stuck; but he knows it is n't luck:
He knows the seas are deeper than tureens.

And the god-almighty devil and the fool
That meet me in the High Street on the strike,
When I walk about my heart a-gathering wool,
Are my good and evil angels if you like.
And both of them together in every kind of weather
Ride me like a double-seated bike.

That 's rough a bit and needs its meaning curled.
But I have a high old hot un in my mind —
A most engrugious notion of the world,
That leaves your lightning 'rithmetic behind:
I give it at a glance when I say 'There ain't no chance,
Nor nothing of the lucky-lottery kind.'

And it 's this way that I make it out to be
No fathers, mothers, countries, climates — none;
Not Adam was responsible for me,
Nor society, nor systems, nary one:
A little sleeping seed, I woke — I did, indeed —
A million years before the blooming sun.

I woke because I thought the time had come;
Beyond my will there was no other cause;
And everywhere I found myself at home,
Because I chose to be the thing I was;
And in whatever shape of mollusc or of ape
I always went according to the laws.

I was the love that chose my mother out;
I joined two lives and from the union burst;
My weakness and my strength without a doubt
Are mine alone forever from the first:
It 's just the very same with a difference in the name
As 'Thy will be done.' You say it if you durst!

They say it daily up and down the land
As easy as you take a drink, it 's true;
But the difficultest go to understand,
And the difficultest job a man can do,

Is to come it brave and meek with thirty bob a week,
And feel that that's the proper thing for you.

It's a naked child against a hungry wolf;
It 's playing bowls upon a splitting wreck;
It's walking on a string across a gulf
With millstones fore-and-aft about your neck;
But the thing is daily done by many and many a one;
And we fall, face downward, fighting, on the deck.

FRANCIS THOMPSON
(1859–1907)

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
Up vistaed hopes, I sped;
And shot, precipitated,
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.

But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat — and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet —
'All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.'

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,
By many a hearted casement, curtained red,
Trellised with intertwining charities;
(For, though I knew His love Who followèd,
Yet was I sore adread
Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside.)
But, if one little casement parted wide,
The gust of His approach would clash it to.
Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.
Across the margent of the world I fled,
And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,
Smiting for shelter on their clangèd bars;
Fretted to dulcet jars
And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.
I said to dawn: Be sudden; to eve: Be soon —
With thy young skyey blossoms heap me over
From this tremendous Lover!
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!
I tempted all His servitors, but to find
My own betrayal in their constancy,
In faith to Him their fickleness to me,
Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.
To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;
Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.
But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,
The long savannahs of the blue;
Or whether, Thunder-driven,
They clanged His chariot 'thwart a heaven,
Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their feet: —
Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.

Still with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
Came on the following Feet,
And a Voice above their beat —
'Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me.'

I sought no more that after which I strayed
In face of man or maid;
But still within the little children's eyes
Seems something, something that replies,
They at least are for me, surely for me!
I turned me to them very wistfully;
But just as their young eyes grew sudden fair
With dawning answers there,
Their angel plucked them from me by the hair.
'Come then, ye other children, Nature's — share
With me' (said I) 'your delicate fellowship;
Let me greet you lip to lip,
Let me twine with you caresses,
Wantoning
With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,
Banqueting
With her in her wind-walled palace,
Underneath her azured daïs,

Quaffing, as your taintless way is,
From a chalice
Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring.'
So it was done:
I in their delicate fellowship was one —
Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.
I knew all the swift importings
On the wilful face of skies;
I knew how the clouds arise,
Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings;
All that's born or dies
Rose and drooped with; made them shapers
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine —
With them joyed and was bereaven.
I was heavy with the even,
When she lit her glimmering tapers
Round the day's dead sanctities.
I laughed in the morning's eyes.
I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,
Heaven and I wept together,
And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine;
Against the red throb of its sunset-heart
I laid my own to beat,
And share commingling heat;
But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.
In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's gray cheek.
For ah! we know not what each other says,
These things and I; in sound *I* speak —
Their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.
Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth;
Let her, if she would owe me,
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me
The breasts o' her tenderness:
Never did any milk of hers once bless
My thirsting mouth.
Nigh and nigh draws the chase,
With unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
And past those noisèd Feet
A Voice comes yet more fleet —
'Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me.'

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!
My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,
And smitten me to my knee;
I am defenseless utterly
I slept, methinks, and woke,
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.
In the rash lusthead of my young powers,
I shook the pillaring hours
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,
I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years —
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.
Yea, faileth now even dream
The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist;
Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,
Are yielding; cords of all too weak account
For earth, with heavy griefs so overplussed.
Ah! is Thy love indeed
A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,
Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?
Ah! must —
Designer infinite! —
Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with it?
My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust;
And now my heart is as a broken fount,
Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever
From the dank thoughts that shiver
Upon the sighful branches of my mind.
Such is; what is to be?
The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?
I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;
Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
From the hid battlements of Eternity:
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
Round the half-glimpsèd turrets slowly wash again;
But not ere him who summoneth
I first have seen, enwound
With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned;
His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.
Whether man's heart or life it be which yields
Thee harvest, must Thy harvest fields
Be dunged with rotten death?

Now of that long pursuit
Comes on at hand the bruit:
That Voice is round me like a bursting sea:
'And is thy earth so marred,
Shattered in shard on shard?
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!
Strange, piteous, futile thing!
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?

Seeing none but I makes much of naught'
(He said),
'And human love needs human meriting:
How hast thou merited —
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?
Alack, thou knowest not
How little worthy of any love thou art!
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
Save Me, save only Me?
All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,

But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
Rise, clasp My hand, and come!'

Halts by me that footfall:
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
'Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He Whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.'

ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN
(1859–)

A SHROPSHIRE LAD

IV.— Reveille

Wake: the silver dusk returning
Up the beach of darkness brims,
And the ship of sunrise burning
Strands upon the eastern rims.

Wake: the vaulted shadow shatters,
Trampled to the door it spanned,
And the tent of night in tatters
Straws the sky-pavilioned land.

Up, lad, up, 't is late for lying:
Hear the drums of morning play;
Hark, the empty highways crying
'Who 'll beyond the hills away?'

Towns and countries woo together,
Forelands beacon, belfries call;
Never lad that trod on leather
Lived to feast his heart on all.

Up, lad: thews that lie and cumber
Sunlit pallets never thrive;
Morns abed and daylight slumber
Were not meant for man alive.

Clay lies still, but blood 's a rover;
Breath 's a ware that will not keep.
Up, lad: when the journey 's over
There 'll be time enough to sleep.

V

Oh, see how thick the goldcup flowers
Are lying in field and lane,
With dandelions to tell the hours
That never are told again.
Oh, may I squire you round the meads
And pick you posies gay?
—'T will do no harm to take my arm.
'You may, young man, you may.'

Ah, spring was sent for lass and lad,
'T is now the blood runs gold,
And man and maid had best be glad
Before the world is old.
What flowers to-day may flower to-morrow,
But never as good as new.
— Suppose I wound my right arm round —
'T is true, young man, 't is true.'

Some lads there are, 't is shame to say,
That only court to thieve,
And once they bear the bloom away
'T is little enough they leave.
Then keep your heart for men like me
And safe from trustless chaps.
My love is true for all and you.
'Perhaps, young man, perhaps.'

Oh, look in my eyes then, can you doubt?
— Why, 't is a mile from town.
How green the grass is all about!
We might as well sit down.
— Ah, life, what is it but a flower?
Why must true lovers sigh?
Be kind, have pity, my own, my pretty,—
'Good-by, young man, good-by.'

XXXIV.— The New Mistress

'Oh, sick I am to see you, will you never let me be?
You may be good for something but you are not good for me.

Oh, go where you are wanted, for you are not wanted here.'
And that was all the farewell when I parted from my dear.

'I will go where I am wanted, to a lady born and bred,
Who will dress me free for nothing in a uniform of red;
She will not be sick to see me if I only keep it clean:
I will go where I am wanted for a soldier of the Queen.

'I will go where I am wanted, for the sergeant does not mind;
He may be sick to see me but he treats me very kind:
He gives me beer and breakfast and a ribbon for my cap,
And I never knew a sweetheart spend her money on a chap.

'I will go where I am wanted, where there's room for one or two,
And the men are none too many for the work there is to do;
Where the standing line wears thinner and the dropping dead lie thick;
And the enemies of England they shall see me and be sick.'

XLI

In my own shire, if I was sad,
Homely comforters I had:
The earth, because my heart was sore,
Sorrowed for the son she bore;
And standing hills, long to remain,
Shared their short-lived comrade's pain.
And bound for the same bourn as I,
On every road I wandered by,
Trod beside me, close and dear,
The beautiful and death-struck year:
Whether in the woodland brown
I heard the beechnut rustle down,
And saw the purple crocus pale
Flower about the autumn dale;
Or littering far the fields of May
Lady-smocks a-bleaching lay,
And like a skylit water stood
The bluebells in the azured wood.
Yonder, lightening other loads,
The seasons range the country roads,
But here in London streets I ken
No such helpmates, only men;
And these are not in plight to bear,
If they would, another's care.
They have enough as 'tis: I see
In many an eye that measures me
The mortal sickness of a mind
Too unhappy to be kind.
Undone with misery, all they can
Is to hate their fellow man;
And till they drop they needs must still
Look at you and wish you ill.

XLIX

Think no more, lad; laugh, be jolly:
Why should men make haste to die?
Empty heads and tongues a-talking
Make the rough road easy walking,
And the feather pate of folly
Bears the falling sky.
Oh, 'tis jesting, dancing, drinking
Spins the heavy world around.
If young hearts were not so clever,
Oh, they would be young forever:
Think no more; 'tis only thinking
Lays lads underground.

SIR HENRY NEWBOLT
(1862–)

DRAKE'S DRUM

Drake he's in his hammock an' a thousand mile away,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?),
Slung atween the round shot in Nombre Dios Bay,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Yarnder lumes the Island, yarnder lie the ships,
Wi' sailor lads a dancin' heel-an'-toe,
An' the shore-lights flashin', an' the night-tide dashin',
He sees et arl so plainly as he saw et long ago.

Drake he was a Devon man, an' ruled the Devon seas.
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?),
Rovin' tho' his death fell, he went wi' heart at ease,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
'Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,
Strike et when your powder's runnin' low;
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,
An' drum them up the Channel as we drummed them long ago.'

Drake he 's in his hammock till the great Armadas come,
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?),
Slung atween the round shot, listenin' for the drum,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Call him on the deep sea, call him up the Sound,
Call him where ye sail to meet the foe;
Where the old trade 's plyin' an' the old flag flyin'
They shall find him ware an' wakin', as they found him long ago!

VITAI LAMPADA

There 's a breathless hush in the Close to-night —
Ten to make and the match to win —
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
An hour to play and the last man in.
And it 's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,
But his Captain's hand on his shoulder smote —
'Play up! play up! and play the game!'

The sand of the desert is sodden red,—
Red with the wreck of a square that broke; —
The Gatling 's jammed and the Colonel dead,
And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.
The river of death has brimmed his banks,
And England 's far, and Honor a name,
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks:
'Play up! play up! and play the game!'

This is the word that year by year,
While in her place the School is set,
Every one of her sons must hear,
And none that hears it dare forget.
This they all with a joyful mind
Bear through life like a torch in flame,
And falling fling to the host behind —
'Play up! play up! and play the game!'

CLIFTON CHAPEL

This is the Chapel: here, my son,
Your father thought the thoughts of youth,
And heard the words that one by one
The touch of Life has turned to truth.

Here in a day that is not far,
You too may speak with noble ghosts
Of manhood and the vows of war
You made before the Lord of Hosts.

To set the cause above renown,
To love the game beyond the prize,
To honor, while you strike him down,
The foe that comes with fearless eyes;
To count the life of battle good,
And dear the land that gave you birth,
And dearer yet the brotherhood
That binds the brave of all the earth —

My son, the oath is yours: the end
Is His, Who built the world of strife,
Who gave His children Pain for friend,
And Death for surest hope of life.
To-day and here the fight 's begun,
Of the great fellowship you 're free;
Henceforth the School and you are one,
And what You are the race shall be.

God send you fortune: yet be sure,
Among the lights that gleam and pass,
You 'll live to follow none more pure
Than that which glows on yonder brass.
'Qui procul hinc,' the legend 's writ,—
The frontier-grave is far away —
'Qui ante diem periit:
Sed miles, sed pro patriâ.'

RUDYARD KIPLING (1865-)

THE BALLAD OF EAST AND WEST

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth!

Kamal is out with twenty men to raise the Border side,
And he has lifted the Colonel's mare that is the Colonel's pride:
He has lifted her out of the stable-door between the dawn and the day,
And turned the calkins upon her feet, and ridden her far away.
Then up and spoke the Colonel's son that led a troop of the Guides:

'Is there never a man of all my men can say
where Kamal hides?'
Then up and spoke Mahommed Khan, the son of the Ressaldar,
'If ye know the track of the morning-mist, ye know where his pickets are.
'At dusk he harries the Abazai — at dawn he is into Bonair,
'But he must go by Fort Bukloh to his own place to fare,
'So if ye gallop to Fort Bukloh as fast as a bird can fly,
'By the favor of God ye may cut him off ere he win to the tongue of Jagai,
'But if he be passed the Tongue of Jagai, right swiftly turn ye then,
'For the length and the breadth of that grisly plain is sown with Kamal's men.
'There is rock to the left, and rock to the right, and low lean thorn between,
'And ye may hear a breech-bolt snick where never a man is seen.'
The Colonel's son has taken a horse, and a raw rough dun was he,
With the mouth of a bell and the heart of Hell, and the head of the gallows-tree.
The Colonel's son to the Fort has won, they bid him stay to eat —
Who rides at the tail of a Border thief, he sits not long at his meat.
He 's up and away from Fort Bukloh as fast as he can fly,
Till he was aware of his father's mare in the gut of the Tongue of Jagai,
Till he was aware of his father's mare with Kamal upon her back,
And when he could spy the white of her eye, he made the pistol crack.
He has fired once, he has fired twice, but the whistling ball went wide.
'Ye shoot like a soldier,' Kamal said. 'Show now if ye can ride.'
It 's up and over the Tongue of Jagai, as blown dust-devils go,
The dun he fled like a stag of ten, but the mare like a barren doe.
The dun he leaned against the bit and slugged his head above,
But the red mare played with the snaffle-bars, as a maiden plays with a glove.
There was rock to the left and rock to the right, and low lean thorn between,
And thrice he heard a breech-bolt snick tho' never a man was seen.
They have ridden the low moon out of the sky, their hoofs drum up the dawn,
The dun he went like a wounded bull, but the mare like a new-roused fawn.
The dun he fell at a water-course — in a woeful heap fell he,
And Kamal has turned the red mare back, and pulled the rider free.
He has knocked the pistol out of his hand — small room was there to strive,
''T was only by favor of mine,' quoth he, 'ye rode so long alive:
'There was not a rock for twenty mile, there was not a clump of tree,
'But covered a man of my own men with his rifle cocked on his knee.
'If I had raised my bridle-hand, as I have held it low,
'The little jackals that flee so fast, were feasting all in a row:
'If I had bowed my head on my breast, as I have held it high,
'The kite that whistles above us now were gorged till she could not fly.'
Lightly answered the Colonel's son: — 'Do good to bird and beast,
'But count who come for the broken meats before thou makest a feast.
'If there should follow a thousand swords to carry my bones away,
'Belike the price of a jackal's meal were more than a thief could pay.
'They will feed their horse on the standing crop, their men on the garnered grain,
'The thatch of the byres will serve their fires when all the cattle are slain.
'But if thou thinkest the price be fair, — thy brethren wait to sup,
'The hound is kin to the jackal-spawn, — howl, dog, and call them up!
'And if thou thinkest the price be high, in steer and gear and stack,
'Give me my father's mare again, and I 'll fight my own way back!'
Kamal has gripped him by the hand and set him upon his feet.
'No talk shall be of dogs,' said he, 'when wolf and gray wolf meet.
'May I eat dirt if thou hast hurt of me in deed or breath;
'What dam of lances brought thee forth to jest at the dawn with Death?'
Lightly answered the Colonel's son, 'I hold by the blood of my clan:
'Take up the mare for my father's gift — by God, she has carried a man!'
The red mare ran to the Colonel's son, and nuzzled against his breast,
'We be two strong men,' said Kamal then, 'but she loveth the younger best.
'So she shall go with a lifter's dower, my turquoise-studded rein,

'My broidered saddle and saddle-cloth, and silver stirrups twain.'
The Colonel's son a pistol drew and held it muzzle-end,
'Ye have taken the one from a foe,' said he; 'will ye take the mate from a friend?'
'A gift for a gift,' said Kamal straight; 'a limb for the risk of a limb.
'Thy father has sent his son to me, I'll send my son to him!'
With that he whistled his only son, that dropped from a mountain-crest —
He trod the ling like a buck in spring, and he looked like a lance in rest.
'Now here is thy master,' Kamal said, 'who leads a troop of the Guides,
'And thou must ride at his left side as shield on shoulder rides.
'Till Death or I cut loose the tie, at camp and board and bed,
'Thy life is his — thy fate it is to guard him with thy head.
'So thou must eat the White Queen's meat, and all her foes are thine,
'And thou must harry thy father's hold for the peace of the Border-line,
'And thou must make a trooper tough and hack thy way to power —
'Belike they will raise thee to Ressaldar when I am hanged in Peshawur.'

They have looked each other between the eyes, and there they have found no fault,
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on leavened bread and salt:
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on fire and fresh-cut sod,
On the hilt and the haft of the Khyber knife, and the Wondrous Names of God.
The Colonel's son he rides the mare and Kamal's boy the dun,
And two have come back to Fort Bukloh where there went forth but one.
And when they drew to the Quarter-Guard, full twenty swords flew clear —
There was not a man but carried his feud with the blood of the mountaineer.
'Ha' done! ha' done!' said the Colonel's son. 'Put up the steel at your sides!
'Last night ye had struck at a Border thief — to-night 't is a man of the Guides!'

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the two shall meet.
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, tho' they come from the ends of the earth.

DANNY DEEVER

What are the bugles blowin' for?' said Files-on-Parade.
'To turn you out, to turn you out,' the Color-Sergeant said.
'What makes you look so white, so white?' said Files-on-Parade.
'I'm dreadin' what I've got to watch,' the Color-Sergeant said.

For they're hangin' Danny Deever, you can 'ear the Dead March play,
The regiment's in 'ollow square — they're hangin' him to-day;
They've taken of his buttons off an' cut his stripes away,
An' they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

'What makes the rear-rank breathe so 'ard?' said Files-on-Parade.
'It's bitter cold, it's bitter cold,' the Color-Sergeant said.
'What makes that front-rank man fall down?' says Files-on-Parade.
'A touch o' sun, a touch o' sun,' the Color-Sergeant said.

They are hangin' Danny Deever, they are marchin' of 'im round,
They 'ave 'alted Danny Deever by 'is coffin on the ground;
An' 'e'll swing in 'arf a minute for a sneakin' shootin' hound —
O they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'!

''Is cot was right-'and cot to mine,' said Files-on-Parade.
''E's sleepin' out an' far to-night,' the Color-Sergeant said.
'I've drunk 'is beer a score o' times,' said Files-on-Parade.
''E's drinkin' bitter beer alone,' the Color-Sergeant said.

They are hangin' Danny Deever, you must mark 'im to 'is place,
For 'e shot a comrade sleepin' — you must look 'im in the face;

Nine 'undred of 'is country an' the regiment's disgrace,
While they 're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

'What 's that so black agin the sun?' said Files-on-Parade.
'It 's Danny fightin' 'ard for life,' the Color-Sergeant said.
'What 's that that whimpers over 'ead?' said Files-on-Parade.
'It 's Danny's soul that 's passin' now,' the Color-Sergeant said.

For they 're done with Danny Deever, you can 'ear the quickstep play,
The regiment 's in column, an' they 're marchin' us away;
Ho! the young recruits are shakin', an' they 'll want their beer to-day,
After hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

RECESSIONAL

God of our fathers, known of old
Lord of our far-flung battle-line —
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine —
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies —
The captains and the kings depart —
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

Far-called our navies melt away —
On dune and headland sinks the fire —
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe —
Such boasting as the Gentiles use
Or lesser breeds without the Law —
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard —
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And guarding calls not Thee to guard —
For frantic boast and foolish word,
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!

Amen.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS
(1865–)

THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight 's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening 's full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

INTO THE TWILIGHT

Out-worn heart, in an out-worn time,
Come clear of the nets of wrong and right;
Laugh heart again in the gray twilight,
Sigh heart again in the dew of the morn,

Your mother Eire is always young,
Dew ever shining and twilight gray;
Though hope fall from you and love decay
Burning in fires of a slanderous tongue.

Come heart, where hill is heaped on hill;
For there the mystical brotherhood
Of sun and moon and hollow wood
And river and stream work out their will.

And God stands winding his lonely horn,
And time and the world are ever in flight,

And love is less kind than the gray twilight,
And hope is less dear than the dew of the morn.

RED HANRAHAN'S SONG ABOUT IRELAND

The old brown thorn trees break in two high over Cummen Strand,
Under a bitter black wind that blows from the left hand;
Our courage breaks like an old tree in a black wind and dies,
But we have hidden in our hearts the flame out of the eyes
Of Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan.

The wind has bundled up the clouds high over Knocknarea,
And thrown the thunder on the stones for all that Maeve can say.
Angers that are like noisy clouds have set our hearts abeat;
But we have all bent low and low and kissed the quiet feet
Of Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan.

The yellow pool has overflowed high up on Clooth-na-Bare,
For the wet winds are blowing out of the clinging air;
Like heavy flooded waters our bodies and our blood;
But purer than a tall candle before the Holy Rood
Is Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan.

SONG FROM THE LAND OF HEART'S DESIRE

The wind blows out of the gates of the day,
The wind blows over the lonely of heart,
And the lonely of heart is withered away
While the faeries dance in a place apart,
Shaking their milk-white feet in a ring,
Tossing their milk-white arms in the air;
For they hear the wind laugh and murmur and sing
Of a land where even the old are fair,
And even the wise are merry of tongue;
But I heard a reed of Coolaney say,
'When the wind has laughed and murmured and sung,
The lonely of heart is withered away.'

"A. E." [GEORGE RUSSELL] (1862–)

THE EARTH BREATH

From the cool and dark-lipped furrows
Breathes a dim delight
Through the woodland's purple plumage
To the diamond night.
Aureoles of joy encircle
Every blade of grass
Where the dew-fed creatures silent
And enraptured pass.
And the restless plowman pauses,
Turns and, wondering,
Deep beneath his rustic habit
Finds himself a king;
For a fiery moment looking
With the eyes of God
Over fields a slave at morning
Bowed him to the sod.
Blind and dense with revelation
Every moment flies,
And unto the Mighty Mother,
Gay, eternal, rise
All the hopes we hold, the gladness,
Dreams of things to be.
One of all thy generations,
Mother, hails to thee.
Hail, and hail, and hail forever,
Though I turn again
From thy joy unto the human
Vestiture of pain.
I, thy child who went forth radiant
In the golden prime,
Find thee still the mother-hearted
Through my night in time;
Find in thee the old enchantment
There behind the veil
Where the gods, my brothers, linger.
Hail, forever, hail!

HILAIRE BELLOC (1870–)

THE SOUTH COUNTRY

When I am living in the midlands,
That are sodden and unkind,
I light my lamp in the evening:
My work is left behind;
And the great hills of the South Country
Come back into my mind.

The great hills of the South Country
They stand along the sea,

And it's there, walking in the high woods,
That I could wish to be,
And the men that were boys when I was a boy
Walking along with me.

The men that live in North England
I saw them for a day:
Their hearts are set upon the waste fells,
Their skies are fast and gray;
From their castle-walls a man may see
The mountains far away.

The men that live in West England
They see the Severn strong,
A-rolling on rough water brown
Light aspen leaves along.
They have the secret of the rocks,
And the oldest kind of song.

But the men that live in the South Country
Are the kindest and most wise.
They get their laughter from the loud surf,
And the faith in their happy eyes
Comes surely from our Sister the Spring
When over the sea she flies;
The violets suddenly bloom at her feet,
She blesses us with surprise.

I never get between the pines
But I smell the Sussex air;
Nor I never come on a belt of sand
But my home is there.
And along the sky the line of the Downs
So noble and so bare.

A lost thing could I never find,
Nor a broken thing mend:
And I fear I shall be all alone
When I get towards the end.
Who will be there to comfort me
Or who will be my friend?

I will gather and carefully make my friends
Of the men of the Sussex Weald
They watch the stars from silent folds,
They stiffly plow the field.
By them and the God of the South Country
My poor soul shall be healed.

If I ever become a rich man,
Or if ever I grow to be old,
I will build a house with deep thatch
To shelter me from the cold,
And there shall the Sussex songs be sung
And the story of Sussex told.

I will hold my house in the high wood,
Within a walk of the sea,
And the men that were boys when I was a boy
Shall sit and drink with me.

WALTER DE LA MARE (1873–)

ALL THAT'S PAST

Very old are the woods;
And the buds that break
Out of the briar's boughs,
When March winds wake,
So old with their beauty are—
Oh, no man knows
Through what wild centuries
Roves back the rose.

Very old are the brooks;
And the rills that rise
Where snow sleeps cold beneath
The azure skies
Sing such a history
Of come and gone,
Their every drop is as wise
As Solomon.

Very old are we men;
Our dreams are tales
Told in dim Eden
By Eve's nightingales;
We wake and whisper awhile,
But, the day gone by,
Silence and sleep like fields
Of amaranth lie.

MISS LOO

When thin-strewn memory I look through,
I see most clearly poor Miss Loo,
Her tabby cat, her cage of birds,
Her nose, her hair—her muffled words,
And how she'd open her green eyes,
As if in some immense surprise,
Whenever as we sat at tea,
She made some small remark to me.

It's always drowsy summer when
From out the past she comes again;
The westering sunshine in a pool
Floats in her parlor still and cool;
While the slim bird its lean wires shakes,
As into piercing song it breaks;
Till Peter's pale-green eyes ajar
Dream, wake; wake, dream, in one brief bar;

And I am sitting, dull and shy,
And she with gaze of vacancy,
And large hands folded on the tray,
Musing the afternoon away;
Her satin bosom heaving slow
With sighs that softly ebb and flow,
And her plain face in such dismay,
It seems unkind to look her way:
Until all cheerful back will come
Her cheerful gleaming spirit home:
And one would think that poor Miss Loo
Asked nothing else, if she had you.

JOHN MASEFIELD (1874–)

SEA-FEVER

I must down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a gray mist on the sea's face and a gray dawn breaking.

I must down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must down to the seas again to the vagrant gipsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

FRANK TAYLOR (1873–1913)

ENGLAND'S DEAD

('Make them to be numbered with thy Saints: in glory everlasting.')

Homeward the long ships leap; swift-shod with joy,
Striding the deep sea-dykes fast home they fare,—
Where is my wedded love? Where is my boy?
Where go the dead that died for England where?

Homeward the long ships leap; but not with these
Thy boy, thy wedded love, O gentle-eyed
Woman of England, nor far over seas
Mixing with dull earth sleep the dead that died

For England. They, in God's completed aims,
Bear each his part; unseen of bounded sight,
Down the vast firmament there floats and flames,
Crested with stars and panoplied in light,

Of strenuous clean souls a long array,
With lambent lance and white, bright, blinding sword,
All riding upon horses,— what are they?
They are the dead which died in Christ their Lord

For England, from old time; with God made one,
As on the mount the triple vision shone,
So shine they now, and like the noontide sun
Before them all the fair Saint George rides on.

There goes the boy of Crécy whispering low
To him of Agincourt, a kingly pair,
With many mighty men which bent the bow,—
There go the dead that died for England, there;

There go those quenchless Talbots, there the flower
Of Devon, Grenville, Gilbert, mariners rare,
She too who thought foul scorn of Philip's power,—
There go the dead that died for England, there;
And Sidney who the rippling cup resigned,
And happy Wolfe; wan Pitt released from care,
Nelson the well-beloved and all his kind,—
There go the dead that died for England, there;

And he who brake the Corsican's strong spell,
And Nicholson, impatient of despair,

And Gordon, faithful, desolate sentinel,—
There go the dead that died for England, there;

And there unhelmeted, ungirt of brand,
Victoria moves with mild, maternal air,
Still vigilant, still prayerful for the land,—
There go the dead that died for England, there.

Nor ride they idly nor with indolent rein,
Irresolute, as men that seek no foe,
But by the pathless sea, by peak and plain,
Bright-eyed, stern-lipped, all day, all night, they go

Forth as a fire that snatches and devours
Wind-withered woods, so go they swift and fell,
Warring with principalities and powers,
Hunting through space the swart, old bands of Hell;

And all the sounding causeways of the spheres
Ring like white iron with the rhythmic tread
Of these and their innumerable peers;
But most round England muster England's dead,

Round England cradled in her roaring seas,
With Arctic snows white-girdled, bathed in suns
Asian and Australasian, there go these;
And where one solitary trader runs

His English keel, and where one lonely sword
Glimmers for England, one unsleeping brain
Watches and works for England, thitherward
Gather the bright souls of her servants slain

For her, and lock their shimmering ranks, and sweep
Round England's child as sweeps the northern gale
Round some stark pine-tree on the moorland steep,
And from the flash and rattle of their mail

Hell's pale marauders shudderingly recoil
Frustrate. O glad condition and sublime
Of our undying dead, to fight and foil
The ancient foe, continually to climb

Through God's high order of His Saints, to meet
Some soul whose star-like name lit all their course,
And commune with him, to discern and greet
Old kindred, love, and friendship, hound and horse;

To see God face to face, and still to see
And labor for the loves that grope on earth,
To wait serenely till all souls shall be
One in God's aristocracy of worth,—

O glad condition and sublime! whereto
That southern tomb thy hands may never tend
Was but the gateway thy loved boy passed through,
Thy wedded love passed through, that he might wend

Homeward to thee; thou can'st not see the blaze
Of his great blade nor hear his trumpets blare,
Yet thick as brown leaves round about thy ways,
There go the dead that died for England, there.

RUPERT BROOKE (1887–1915)

THE OLD VICARAGE, GRANTCHESTER

(Café des Westens, Berlin, May, 1912)

Just now the lilac is in bloom,
All before my little room;
And in my flower-beds, I think,
Smile the carnation and the pink;
And down the borders, well I know,
The poppy and the pansy blow . . .
Oh! there the chestnuts, summer through,
Beside the river make for you
A tunnel of green gloom, and sleep
Deeply above; and green and deep
The stream mysterious glides beneath,
Green as a dream and deep as death.
— Oh, damn! I know it! and I know
How the May fields all golden show,
And when the day is young and sweet,

Gild gloriously the bare feet
That run to bathe. . . .
Du lieber Gott!

Here am I, sweating, sick, and hot,
And there the shadowed waters fresh
Lean up to embrace the naked flesh.
Temperamentvoll German Jews
Drink beer around; — and *there* the dews
Are soft beneath a morn of gold.
Here tulips bloom as they are told;
Unkempt about those hedges blows
An English unofficial rose;
And there the unregulated sun
Slopes down to rest when day is done,
And wakes a vague unpunctual star,
A slippered Hesper; and there are
Meads towards Haslingfield and Coton
Where *das Betreten*'s not *verboten*.

εἴθε, γενοίμην . . . would I were
In Grantchester, in Grantchester! —
Some, it may be, can get in touch
With Nature there, or Earth, or such.
And clever modern men have seen
A Faun a-peeping through the green,
And felt the Classics were not dead,
To glimpse a Naiad's reedy head,
Or hear the Goat-foot piping low: . . .
But these are things I do not know.
I only know that you may lie
Day long and watch the Cambridge sky,
And, flower-lulled in sleepy grass,
Hear the cool lapse of hours pass,
Until the centuries blend and blur
In Grantchester, in Grantchester. . . .
Still in the dawnlit waters cool
His ghostly Lordship swims his pool,
And tries the strokes, essays the tricks,
Long learnt on Hellespont, or Styx.
Dan Chaucer hears his river still
Chatter beneath a phantom mill.

Tennyson notes, with studious eye,
How Cambridge waters hurry by . . .
And in that garden, black and white,
Creep whispers through the grass all night;
And spectral dance, before the dawn,
A hundred vicars down the lawn;
Curates, long dust, will come and go
On lissom, clerical, printless toe;
And oft between the boughs is seen
The sly shade of a Rural Dean . . .
Till, at a shiver in the skies,
Vanishing with Satanic cries,
The prim ecclesiasti- rout
Leaves but a startled sleeper-out,
Gray heavens, the first bird's drowsy calls,
The falling house that never falls.

God! I will pack, and take a train,
And get me to England once again!
For England's the one land, I know,
Where men with Splendid Hearts may go;
And Cambridgeshire, of all England,
The shire for Men who Understand;
And of *that* district I prefer
The lovely hamlet Grantchester.
For Cambridge people rarely smile,
Being urban, squat, and packed with guile;
And Royston men in the far South
Are black and fierce and strange of mouth;
At Over they fling oaths at one,
And worse than oaths at Trumpington,
And Ditton girls are mean and dirty,
And there's none in Harston under thirty,
And folks in Shelford and those parts
Have twisted lips and twisted hearts,
And Barton men make Cockney rhymes,
And Coton's full of nameless crimes,
And things are done you'd not believe
At Madingley on Christmas Eve.
Strong men have run for miles and miles
When one from Cherry Hinton smiles;
Strong men have blanched, and shot their wives,
Rather than send them to St. Ives;
Strong men have cried like babes, bydam,
To hear what happened at Babraham.
But Grantchester! ah, Grantchester!
There's peace and holy quiet there,
Great clouds along pacific skies,
And men and women with straight eyes,
Lithe children lovelier than a dream,
A bosky wood, a slumbrous stream,
And little kindly winds that creep
Round twilight corners, half asleep.
In Grantchester their skins are white;
They bathe by day, they bathe by night;
The women there do all they ought;
The men observe the rules of Thought.
They love the Good; they worship Truth;
They laugh uproariously in youth;
(And when they get to feeling old,
They up and shoot themselves, I'm told) . .

Ah God! to see the branches stir
Across the moon at Grantchester!
To smell the thrilling-sweet and rotten
Unforgettable, unforgotten
River-smell, and hear the breeze
Sobbing in the little trees.
Say, do the elm-clumps greatly stand
Still guardians of the holy land?

The chestnuts shade, in reverend dream,
The yet unacademic stream?
Is dawn a secret shy and cold
Anadyomene, silver-gold?
And sunset still a golden sea
From Haslingfield to Madingley?
And after, ere the night is born,
Do hares come out about the corn?
Oh, is the water sweet and cool,
Gentle and brown, above the pool?
And laughs the immortal river still
Under the mill, under the mill?
Say, is there Beauty yet to find?
And Certainty? and Quiet kind?
Deep meadows yet, for to forget
The lies, and truths, and pain? . . . oh! yet
Stands the Church clock at ten to three?
And is there honey still for tea?

FRANCIS LEDWIDGE (1891–1917)

THE DEATH OF AILILL

When there was heard no more the war's loud sound,
And only the rough corn-crake filled the hours.
And hill winds in the furze and drowsy flowers,
Maeve in her chamber with her white head bowed
On Ailill's heart was sobbing: 'I have found
The way to love you now,' she said, and he
Winked an old tear away and said: 'The proud
Unyielding heart loves never.' And then she:
'I love you now, tho' once when we were young
We walked apart like two who were estranged
Because I loved you not, now all is changed.'
And he who loved her always called her name
And said: 'You do not love me; 't is your tongue
Talks in the dusk; you love the blazing gold
Won in the battles, and the soldier's fame.
You love the stories that are often told
By poets in the hall.' Then Maeve arose
And sought her daughter Findebar: 'Oh, child,
Go tell your father that my love went wild
With all my wars in youth, and say that now
I love him stronger than I hate my foes. . . .'
And Findebar unto her father sped
And touched him gently on the rugged brow,
And knew by the cold touch that he was dead.

POEMS OF THE GREAT WAR

Much of the poetry of the later nineteenth and early twentieth century is inspired by a strong spirit of national self-consciousness, and the division between this section and the preceding one is made for convenience only. English poetry before and after the beginning of the Great War has the same general characteristics, though the immensity of the struggle and the tremendous issues involved gave to the work of some of the younger poets a depth of significance which they had not shown up to that time. This is especially true of the men who themselves fought, such as Rupert Brooke, who died on his way to the Dardanelles on April 23, 1915; Julian Grenfell, who died from wounds received at Ypres in May of the same year; Charles Hamilton Sorley, killed in action in France in October, 1915; and Viscount Stuart, killed in action in France in September, 1915. It is heartrending to think of what these young poets might have achieved if they had lived, but one has at least the small consolation that the War in which they laid down their lives stirred them to heights and depths of emotion which are not ordinarily reached in the 'piping times of peace.' They lived greatly in the all too short span of life allotted to them, and wrote nobly at a time when every element of beauty in modern civilization seemed destined to destruction.

FOR THE FALLEN

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were stanch to the end against odds uncounted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;
They have no lot in our labor of the daytime;
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known
As the stars are known to the Night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain;
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,
To the end, to the end, they remain.

— *Laurence Binyon.*

THE SOLDIER

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

—*Rupert Brooke.*

AFTERMATH

Yes, he is gone, there is the message, see!
Slain by a Prussian bullet as he led
The men that loved him — dying, cheered them on —
My son, my eldest son. So be it, God!

This is no time for tears, no time to mourn,
No time for somber draperies of woe.
Let the aggressors weep! for they have sinned
The sin of Satan. Lust of power and pride,
Mean envy of their neighbors' weal, a plot
Hatched amidst glozing smiles and prate of peace
Through the false years; until the Day, the Day
When all this worship at the Devil's feet
Should win the world. Aye, let them weep! But we
With eyes undimmed march on; our mourning robes
Be-jeweled by the deeds of those that die,
Luster on luster, till no sable patch
Peeps through their brilliance. In the years to come,
When we have done our work, and God's own peace,
The Peace of Justice, Mercy, Righteousness,
Like the still radiance of a summer's dawn,
With tranquil glory floods a troubled world:
Why then, perhaps, in the old hall at home,
Where once I dreamed my eldest-born should stand
The master, as I stand the master now,
Our eyes, my wife, shall meet and gleam, and mark
Niched on the walls in sanctity of pride,
Hal's sword, Dick's medal, and the cross he won
Yet never wore. That is the time for tears,
Drawn from a well of love deep down; deep down,
Deep as the mystery of immortal souls,
That is the time for tears; not now, not now!

—*Burghclere.*

THE WIFE OF FLANDERS

Low and brown barns thatched and repatched and tattered
Where I had seven sons until to-day,
A little hill of hay your spur has scattered . . .
This is not Paris. You have lost the way.

You, staring at your sword to find it brittle,
Surprised at the surprise that was your plan,
Who, shaking and breaking barriers not a little,
Find never more the death-door of Sedan.

Must I for more than carnage call you claimant,
Paying you a penny for each son you slay?
Man, the whole globe in gold were no repayment
For what *you* have lost. And how shall I repay?

What is the price of that red spark that caught me
From a kind farm that never had a name?
What is the price of that dead man they brought me?
For other dead men do not look the same.

How should I pay for one poor graven steeple
Whereon you shattered what you shall not know,
How should I pay you, miserable people?
How should I pay you everything you owe?

Unhappy, can I give you back your honor?
Though I forgave would any man forget?
While all the great green land has trampled on her
The treason and terror of the night we met.

Not any more in vengeance or in pardon
An old wife bargains for a bean that's hers
You have no word to break; no heart to harden.
Ride on and prosper. You have lost your spurs.

—*Gilbert K. Chesterton.*

A HARROW GRAVE IN FLANDERS

Here in the marshland, past the battered
bridge,
One of a hundred grains untimely sown,
Here, with his comrades of the hard-won
ridge
He rests, unknown.

His horoscope had seemed so plainly drawn,
School triumphs, earned apace in work and
play;
Friendships at will; then love's delightful
dawn
And mellowing day.

Home fostering hope; some service to the
State;
Benignant age; then the lost tryst to keep
Where in the yew-tree shadow congregate
His fathers sleep.

Was here the one thing needful to distil
From life's alembic, through this holier
fate,
The man's essential soul, the hero-will?
We ask; and wait.

—*Crewe.*

'HOW SLEEP THE BRAVE'

Nay, nay, sweet England, do not grieve!
Not one of these poor men who died
But did within his soul believe
That death for thee was glorified.

Ever they watched it hovering near
That mystery 'yond thought to plumb,
Perchance sometimes in loathèd fear
They heard cold Danger whisper, Come! —

Heard and obeyed. Oh, if thou weep
Such courage and honor, beauty, care,
Be it for joy that those who sleep
Only thy joy could share.

—*Walter de la Mare.*

THE DEFENDERS

His wage of rest at nightfall still
He takes, who sixty years has known
Of plowing over Cotsall hill
And keeping trim the Cotsall stone.

He meditates the dusk, and sees
Folds of his wonted shepherdings
And lands of stubble and tall trees
Becoming insubstantial things.

And does he see on Costall hill —
Thrown even to the central shire —
The funnelled shapes forbidding still
The stranger from his cottage fire?

—*John Drinkwater.*

RAINING

The night I left my father said:
'You 'll go and do some stupid thing.
You 've no more sense in that fat head
Than Silly Billy Witterling.

'Not sense to come in when it rains —
Not sense enough for that, you 've got.
You 'll get a bullet through your brains,
Before you know, as like as not.'

And now I 'm lying in the trench
And shells and bullets through the night
Are raining in a steady drench,
I 'm thinking the old man was right.

—*W. W. Gibson.*

THE QUESTION

I wonder if the old cow died or not.
Gey bad she was the night I left, and sick.
Dick reckoned she would mend. He knows
a lot —
At least he fancies so himself, does Dick.

Dick knows a lot. But maybe I did wrong
To leave the cow to him, and come away.
Over and over like a silly song
These words keep bumming in my head all
day.

And all I think of, as I face the foe
And take my lucky chance of being shot,
Is this — that if I 'm hit I 'll never know
Till Doomsday if the old cow died or not.

—*W. W. Gibson.*

HIS FATHER

I quite forgot to put the spigot in.
It 's just come over me. . . . And it is queer
To think he 'll not care if we lose or win
And yet be jumping-mad about that beer.

I left it running full. He must have said
A thing or two. I 'd give my stripes to hear

What he will say if I'm reported dead
Before he gets me told about that beer!
—*W. W. Gibson.*

THE DEAD

TO ONE KILLED IN ACTION

Dear love, they say thou art at rest.
I heed them not, though thou art long,
Dreaming that thou, with heart still strong
For fighting, followest some far quest.

They say, dear heart, I must forget.
Nay, though the agony be deep,
That memory can never sleep.
Thy passioned kisses linger yet.

They say, dear love, the daisies blithe
Shall o'er thy head in summer spring.
Daisies! . . . I see thy body swing
Lithe and strong-limbed, above the scythe.

Dear love, they say that in the light
Of Heaven's joy our souls shall meet.
Dear God! I want thee now, the sweet
Sight of thee — not in Heaven — to-night!
—*Violet Gillespie.*

THE AIRMAN

Wild wind, and drear, beneath the pale stars blowing,
Whom do you hunt to-night?
Out of the west into the storm-cloud glowing
A biplane wings her flight.

In the gray day-dawn was there no returning,
No homewards for the dead: —
Only a broken wing, a biplane burning,
A shattered airship shed!

O Nation proud, on whose red altar gladly
One more young Life is laid,
Scatter the news — flutter the posters madly —
'Triumph of British raid!'

What of the Cross they brought to her — his Mother?
Wanly her dumb lips smiled,
Then whispered: 'Give back *him* — I had no other —
My Son — my only child.'
—*Gregg Goddard.*

INTO BATTLE

The naked earth is warm with Spring,
And with green grass and bursting trees
Leans to the sun's gaze glorying,
And quivers in the sunny breeze;

And Life is Color and Warmth and Light,
And a striving evermore for these;
And he is dead who will not fight;
And who dies fighting has increase.

The fighting man shall from the sun
Take warmth, and life from the glowing earth;
Speed with the light-foot winds to run,
And with the trees to newer birth;
And find, when fighting shall be done,
Great rest, and fullness after dearth.

All the bright company of Heaven
Hold him in their high comradeship,
The Dog-Star and the Sisters Seven,
Orion's Belt and sworded hip.

The woodland trees that stand together,
They stand to him each one a friend;
They gently speak in the windy weather;
They guide to valley and ridges' end.

The kestrel hovering by day,
And the little owls that call by night,
Bid him be swift and keen as they,
As keen of ear, as swift of sight.

The blackbird sings to him, 'Brother, brother,
If this be the last song you shall sing
Sing well, for you may not sing another;
Brother, sing.'

In dreary doubtful waiting hours,
Before the brazen frenzy starts,
The horses show him nobler powers;
O patient eyes, courageous hearts!

And when the burning moment breaks,
And all things else are out of mind,
And only Joy-of-Battle takes
Him by the throat, and makes him blind,

Through joy and blindness he shall know,
Not caring much to know, that still
Nor lead nor steel shall reach him, so
That it be not the Destined Will.

The thundering line of battle stands,
And in the air Death moans and sings;

But Day shall clasp him with strong hands,
And Night shall fold him in soft wings.
— *Julian Grenfell.*

Flanders, April, 1915.

THE WYKHAMIST

In the wake of the yellow sunset one pale star
Hangs over the darkening city's purple haze.
An errand-boy in the street beneath me plays
On a penny whistle. Very faint and far
Comes the scroop of tortured gear on a battered car.
A hyacinth nods pallid blooms on the window sill,
Swayed by the tiny wind. St. Catherine's Hill
Is a place of mystery, a land of dreams.
The tramp of soldiers, barrack-marching, seems
A thing remote, untouched by fate or time.
. . . A year ago you heard Cathedral's chime,
You hurried up to books — a year ago;
— Shouted for 'Houses' in New Field below.
. . . You . . . 'died of wounds' . . . they told me
. . . yet your feet
Pass with the others down the twilit street.
— *Nora Griffiths.*

NON-COMBATANT

Before one drop of angry blood was shed
I was sore hurt and beaten to my knee;
Before one fighting man reeled back and died
The War-Lords struck at me.

They struck me down — an idle, useless mouth,
As cumbrous — nay, more cumbrous — than the dead,
With life and heart afire to give and give
I take a dole instead.

With life and heart afire to give and give
I take and eat the bread of charity.
In all the length of all this eager land,
No man has need of me.

That is my hurt — my burning, beating wound;
That is the spear-thrust driven through my pride!
With aimless hands, and mouth that must be fed,
I wait and stand aside.

Let me endure it, then, with stiffened lip:
I, even I, have suffered in the strife!
Let me endure it then — I give my pride
Where others give a life.
— *Cicely Hamilton.*

SOLDIER, SOLDIER

Soldier, soldier, off to war,
Take me a letter to my sweetheart O.
He 's gone away to France
With his carbine and his lance,
And a lock of brown hair of his sweetheart O.

Fair maid of London, happy may you be
To know so much of your sweetheart O.
There 's not a handsome lad,
To get the chance he 's had,
But would skip, with a kiss for his sweetheart O.

Soldier, soldier, whatever shall I do
If the cruel Germans take my sweetheart O?
They 'll pen him in the jail
And starve him thin and pale,
With never a kind word from his sweetheart O.

Fair maid of London, is that all you see
Of the lad you 've taken for your sweetheart O?
He 'll make his prison ring
With his God Save the King
And his God bless the blue eyes of my sweetheart O!

Soldier, soldier, if by shot or shell
They wound him, my dear lad, my sweetheart O,
He 'll lie bleeding in the rain
And call me, all in vain,
Crying for the fingers of his sweetheart O.

Pretty one, pretty one, now take a word from me:
Don't you grudge the life-blood of your sweetheart O.
For you must understand
He gives it to our land,
And proud should fly the colors of his sweetheart O.

Soldier, soldier, my heart is growing cold—
If a German shot kill my sweetheart O!
I could not lift my head
If my dear love lay dead
With his wide eyes waiting for his sweetheart O.

Poor child, poor child, go to church and pray,
Pray God to spare you your sweetheart O.
But if he live or die
The English flag must fly,
And England take care of his sweetheart O!

—*Maurice Hewlett.*

THE OLD WAY

[‘I deeply regret to report the loss of H. M ships . . .’—Sir John Jellicoe’s dispatch. (The Times, July 7th, 1916.)]

There ’s a sea that lies uncharted far beyond the setting sun,
And a gallant Fleet was sailing there whose fighting days are done,
Sloop and Galleon, Brig and Pinnace, all the rigs you never met,
Fighting Frigate, grave Three-decker, with their snowy canvas set;
Dozed and dreamed, when, on a sudden, ev’ry sail began to swell,
For the breeze has spoken strangers, with a stirring tale to tell,
And a thousand eager voices flung the challenge out to sea:
‘Come they hither in the old way, in the only way that ’s free?

And the flying Breeze called softly: ‘In the old way,
‘Through the winters and the waters of the North,
‘They have waited, ah the waiting, in the old way,
‘Strong and patient, from the Pentlands to the Forth.
‘There was fog to blind and baffle off the headlands,
‘There were gales to beat the worst that ever blew,
‘But they took it, as they found it, in the old way,
‘And I know it often helped to think of you.’

’T was a Frigate, under stun-sails, as she gently gathered way
Spoke in jerks, like all the Frigates, who have little time to stay:
‘We ’d to hurry, under Nelson, thank my timbers I was tough,
‘For he worked us as he loved us, and he never had enough—
‘Are the English mad as ever? were the Frigates just as few?
(‘Will their sheets be always stranding, ere the rigging ’s rove anew?)
‘Just as Saxon slow at starting, just as weirdly wont to win?
‘Had they Frigates out and watching? Did they pass the signals in?’

And the laughing Breeze made answer:
‘In the old way;
‘You should see the little cruisers spread and fly,
‘Peering over the horizon, in the old way,
‘And a seaplane up and wheeling in the sky.
‘When the wireless snapped “The enemy is sighted,”
‘If his accents were comparatively new,
‘Why, the sailor men were cheering, in the old way,
‘So I naturally smiled, and thought of you.’

Then a courtly voice and stately from a tall Three-decker came—
She ’d the manners of a monarch and a story in her name:
‘We ’d a winter gale at even, and my shrouds are aching yet,
‘It was more than time for reefing when the upper sails were set.
‘So we chased in woeful weather, till we closed in failing light,
‘Then we fought them, as we caught them, just as Hawke had bid us fight;
‘And we swept the sea by sunrise, clear and free beyond a doubt.
‘Was it thus the matter ended when the enemy was out?’

Cried the Breeze: ‘They fought and followed in the old way,
‘For they raced to make a record all the while,
‘With a knot to veer and haul on, in the old way,
‘That had never even met the measured mile—
‘And the guns were making merry in the twilight.
‘That the enemy was victor may be true,

'Still — he hurried into harbor — in the old way —
'And I wondered if he'd ever heard of you.'

Came a gruff and choking chuckle, and a craft as black as doom
Lumbered laughing down to leeward, as the bravest gave her room.
'Set 'un blazin', good your Lordships, for the tide be makin' strong,
'Proper breeze to fan a fireship, set 'un drivin' out along!
''T is the "Torch," wi' humble duty, from Lord Howard 'board the Ark.
'We 'm a laughin'-stock to Brixham, but a terror after dark,
'Hold an' bilge anigh to burstin', pitch and sulphur, tar an' all,
'Was it so, my dear, they 'm fashioned for my Lord High Admiral?'

Cried the Breeze: 'You 'd hardly know it from the old way
('Gloriana, did you waken at the fight?),
'Stricken shadows, scared and flying, in the old way
'From the swift destroying specters of the night,
'There were some that steamed and scattered south for safety,
'From the mocking western echo "Where be tu?"
'There were some that — got the message — in the old way,
'And the flashes in the darkness spoke of you.'

There 's a wondrous Golden Harbor, far beyond the setting sun,
Where a gallant ship may anchor when her fighting days are done,
Free from tempest, rock and battle, toil and tumult safely o'er,
Where the breezes murmur softly and there 's peace for evermore.
They have climbed the last horizon, they are standing in from sea,
And the Pilot makes the Haven where a ship is glad to be:
Comes at last the glorious greeting, strangely new and ages old,
See the sober gray is shining like the Tudor green and gold!

And the waiting jibs are hoisted, in the old way,
As the guns begin to thunder down the line;
Hear the silver trumpets calling, in the old way!
Over all the silken pennons float and shine,
'Did you voyage all unspoken, small and lonely?
'Or with fame, the happy fortune of the few?
'So you win the Golden Harbor, in the old way,
'There 's the old sea welcome waiting there for you.'

— *Ronald A. Hopwood.*

A LEGEND OF YPRES

Before the throne the spirits of the slain
With a loud voice importunately cried,
'O Lord of Hosts, whose name be glorified,
Scarce may the line one onslaught more sustain
Wanting our help. Let it not be in vain,
Not all in vain, O God, that we have died.'
And smiling on them our good Lord replied,
'Begone then, foolish ones, and fight again.'
Our eyes were holden, that we saw them not;
Disheartened foes beheld — our prisoners said —
Behind us massed, a mighty host indeed,
Where no host was. On comrades unforgot
We thought, and knew that all those valiant dead
Forwent their rest to save us at our need.

— *Elinor Jenkins.*

(See note on "The First Battle of Ypres," by Mrs. Margaret L. Woods, p. 1024.)

THE SPIRES OF OXFORD

I saw the spires of Oxford
As I was passing by,
The gray spires of Oxford
Against a pearl-gray sky.
My heart was with the Oxford men
Who went abroad to die.

The years go fast in Oxford,
The golden years and gay,
The hoary Colleges look down
On careless boys at play.
But when the bugles sounded war
They put their games away.

They left the peaceful river,
The cricket-field, the quad,
The shaven lawns of Oxford

To seek a bloody sod—
They gave their merry youth away
For country and for God.

God rest you, happy gentlemen,
Who laid your good lives down,
Who took the khaki and the gun
Instead of cap and gown.
God bring you to a fairer place
Than even Oxford town.

—*Winifred M. Letts.*

MANY SISTERS TO MANY BROTHERS

When we fought the campaigns (in the long Christmas rains)
With soldiers spread in troops on the floor,
I shot as straight as you, my losses were as few,
My victories as many, or more.
And when in naval battle, amid cannon's rattle,
Fleet met fleet in the bath,
My cruisers were as trim, my battleships as grim,
My submarines cut as swift a path.
Or, when it rained too long, and the strength of the strong
Surged up and broke a way with blows,
I was as fit and keen, my fists hit as clean,
Your black eye matched my bleeding nose.
Was there a scrap of play in which you, the boy,
Could better me? You could not climb higher,
Ride straighter, run as quick (and to smoke made you sick)
. . . But I sit here, and you 're under fire.

Oh, it 's you that have the luck, out there in blood and muck:
You were born beneath a kindly star;
All we dreamt, I and you, you can really go and do,
And I can't, the way things are.
In a trench you are sitting, while I am knitting
A hopeless sock that never gets done.
Well, here 's luck, my dear; — and you 've got it, no fear;
But for me . . . a war is poor fun.

—*Rose Macaulay.*

THE ISLAND OF SKYROS

Here, where we stood together, we three men,
Before the war had swept us to the East
Three thousand miles away, I stand again
And hear the bells, and breathe, and go to feast.
We trod the same path, to the self-same place,
Skyros whose shadows the great seas erase,
Yet here I stand, having beheld their graves,
And Seddul Bahr that ever more blood craves.
So, since we communed here, our bones have been
Nearer, perhaps, than they again will be,
Earth and the world-wide battle lie between,
Death lies between, and friend-destroying sea.
Yet here, a year ago, we talked and stood
As I stand now, with pulses beating blood.

I saw her like a shadow on the sky
In the last light, a blur upon the sea,
Then the gale's darkness put the shadow by,
But from one grave that island talked to me;
And, in the midnight, in the breaking storm,
I saw its blackness and a blinking light,
And thought, 'So death obscures your gentle form,
So memory strives to make the darkness bright;
And, in that heap of rocks, your body lies,
Part of the island till the planet ends,
My gentle comrade, beautiful and wise,
Part of this crag this bitter surge offends,
While I, who pass, a little obscure thing,
War with this force, and breathe, and am its king.'

—*John Masefield.*

THE SEARCHLIGHTS

Political morality differs from individual morality because there is no power above the state.—GENERAL VON BERNHARDI.

Shadow by shadow, stripped for fight
The lean black cruisers search the sea.
Night-long their level shafts of light
Revolve, and find no enemy.
Only they know each leaping wave
May hide the lightning, and their grave.

And in the land they guard so well
Is there no silent watch to keep?

An age is dying, and the bell
  Rings midnight on a vaster deep.
But over all its waves, once more
The searchlights move, from shore to shore.

And captains that we thought were dead,
  And dreamers that we thought were dumb,
And voices that we thought were fled,
  Arise, and call us, and we come;
And 'search in thine own soul,' they cry;
'For there, too, lurks thine enemy.'

Search for the foe in thine own soul,
  The sloth, the intellectual pride;
The trivial jest that veils the goal
  For which our fathers lived and died;
The lawless dreams, the cynic Art,
That rend thy nobler self apart.

Not far, not far into the night,
  These level swords of light can pierce;
Yet for her faith does England fight,
  Her faith in this our universe,
Believing Truth and Justice draw
From founts of everlasting law;

The law that rules the stars, our stay,
  Our compass through the world's wide sea,
The one sure light, the one sure way,
  The one firm base of Liberty;
The one firm road that men have trod
Through Chaos to the throne of God.

Therefore a Power above the State,
  The unconquerable Power returns.
The fire, the fire that made her great
  Once more upon her altar burns,
Once more, redeemed and healed and whole,
She moves to the Eternal Goal.

—*Alfred Noyes.*

WIRELESS

Now to those who search the deep —
  Gleam of Hope and *Kindly Light,*
Once, before you turn to sleep,
  Breathe a message through the night
Never doubt that they 'll receive it.
  Send it, once, and you 'll believe it.

Think you these aerial wires
  Whisper more than spirits may?
Think you that our strong desires
  Touch no distance when we pray?
Think you that no wings are flying
  'Twixt the living and the dying?

Inland, here, upon your knees,
  You shall breathe from urgent lips
Round the ships that guard your seas
  Fleet on fleet of angel ships;
Yea, the guarded may so bless them
  That no terrors can distress them.

You shall guide the darkling prow,
  Kneeling — thus — and far inland;
You shall touch the storm-beat brow,
  Gently as a spirit-hand.
Even a blindfold prayer may speed them,
  And a little child may lead them.

—*Alfred Noyes.*

KILMENY

Dark, dark lay the drifters against the red West,
  As they shot their long meshes of steel overside,
And the oily green waters were rocking to rest,
  When Kilmeny went out, at the turn of the tide;
And nobody knew where that lassie would roam,
  For the magic that called her was tapping unseen,
It was well nigh a week ere Kilmeny came home;
  And nobody knew where Kilmeny had been.
She 'd a gun at her bow that was Newcastle's best,
  And a gun at her stern that was fresh from the Clyde;
And a secret her skipper had never confessed,
  Not even at dawn, to his newly-wed bride;
And a wireless that whispered above, like a gnome,
  The laughter of London, the boasts of Berlin;
Oh, it may have been mermaids that lured her from home;
  But nobody knew where Kilmeny had been.

It was dark when Kilmeny came home from her quest,
  With a bridge dabbed red where her skipper had died,
But she moved like a bride with a rose at her breast,
  And 'Well done, Kilmeny,' the Admiral cried.

Now, at sixty-four fathom, a conger may come,
And nose at the bones of a drowned submarine;
But — late in the evening Kilmeny came home;
And nobody knew where Kilmeny had been.

There's a wandering shadow that stares at the foam —
Though they sing all the night to old England, their queen —
Late, late in the evening, Kilmeny came home;
And nobody knew where Kilmeny had been.

— *Alfred Noyes.*

CANADIANS

With arrows on their quarters and with numbers on their hoofs,
With the trampling sound of twenty that re-echoes in the roofs,
Low of crest and dull of coat, wan and wild of eye,
Through our English village the Canadians go by.

Shying at a passing cart, swerving from a car,
Tossing up an anxious head to flaunt a snowy star,
Racking at a Yankee gait, reaching at the rein,
Twenty raw Canadians are tasting life again!

Hollow-necked and hollow-flanked, lean of rib and hip,
Strained and sick and weary with the wallow of the ship,
Glad to smell the turf again, hear the robin's call,
Tread again the country road they lost at Montreal!

Fate may bring them dule and woe; better steeds than they
Sleep beside the English guns a hundred leagues away;
But till war hath need of them lightly lie their reins,
Softly fall the feet of them along the English lanes.

— *Will H. Ogilvie.*

MASTER AND PUPIL

(To J. F. R.)

Two years ago I taught him Greek,
And used to give him hints on bowling:
His classics were a trifle weak;
His 'action' needed some controlling.
Convinced of my superior *nous*
I thought him crude, and I was rather
Inclined, as master of his House,
To treat him like a heavy father.

I wrote the usual reports
Upon his 'lack of concentration';
Though certainly at winter Sports
He did not earn this condemnation.
I took him out San Moritz way
One Christmas, and our *rôles* inverted,
For in the land of ski and sleigh
His mastery was soon asserted.

I thought him just a normal lad,
Well-mannered, wholesome, unaffected;
The makings of a Galahad
In him I had not yet detected;
And when I strove to mend his style,
Blue-penciling his exercises,
I little guessed that all the while
His soul was ripe for high emprises.

Two years ago! and here I am,
Rejected as unfit; still trying
(As Verrall taught me on the Cam)
To make Greek Plays electrifying.
And he who, till he was eighteen,
Found life one long excuse for laughing,
For eighteen solid months has been
Continuously 'strafed' or 'strafing.'

He writes me letters from the front
Which prove, although he does n't know it,
That though his words are plain and blunt,
He has the vision of a poet;
And lately, on his eight days' rest,
After long months of hard campaigning,
He came, and lo! an angel guest
I was aware of entertaining.

About himself he seldom spoke,
But often of his widowed mother,
And how she nobly bore the stroke
That robbed them of his sailor brother.
And still, from loyalty or whim,
He would defer to my opinion,
Unconscious how I envied him
His hard-earned gift of self-dominion.

For he had faced the awful King
  Of Shadows in the darksome Valley,
And scorned the terrors of his sting
  In many a perilous storm and sally.
Firm in the faith that never tires
  Or thinks that man is God-forsaken,
From war's fierce seven-times-heated fires
  He had emerged unseared, unshaken.

There are, alas! no sons of mine
  To serve their country in her trial,
Embattled in the cause divine
  Of sacrifice and self-denial;
But if there were, I could not pray
  That God might shield them from disaster
More strongly than I plead to-day
  For this my pupil and my master.

—*O. M.*

REVENGE FOR RHEIMS

Thou Permanence amid all things that pass!
Unchanging Thought amid the drift of change;
Thou Rally of the Soul in days of dross;
  How art Thou fallen!

Thou Prayer, that ever-rising, yet remained,
That for seven hundred years didst sing and soar,
Spirit with wings outspread tip-toe on Earth,
  How art Thou fallen!

Thou Vision frozen, and Thou Sigh transfixed;
Thou Camp of dreams, Thou Fort of faith unstormed,
Time-worn, yet wearying t'ward Eternity,
  How art Thou fallen!

Thou wast to France her Inspiration old,
Thou hadst for ivy earliest memories;
From Thee her Knights, her Angels long looked down;
  How art Thou fallen!

What vengeance for Thy ruin shall She hurl?
Oh, be that vengeance, that the ruin stand,
Only those Choirs forever unrestored!
  Ever unfallen!

—*Stephen Phillips.*

SOCKS

Shining pins that dart and click
  In the fireside's sheltered peace
Check the thoughts that cluster thick—
  20 plain and then decrease.

He was brave—well, so was I—
  Keen and merry, but his lip
Quivered when he said good-by—
  Purl the seam-stitch, purl and slip.

Never used to living rough,
  Lots of things he 'd got to learn;
Wonder if he 's warm enough—
  Knit 2, catch 2, knit 1, turn.

Hark! The paper-boys again!
  Wish that shout could be suppressed;
Keeps one always on the strain—
  Knit off 9, and slip the rest.

Wonder if he 's fighting now,
  What he 's done an where he 's been;
He 'll come out on top, somehow—
  Slip 1, knit 2, purl 14.

—*Jessie Pope.*

'FORM FOURS'

A VOLUNTEER'S NIGHTMARE

If you 're Volunteer Artist or Athlete, or if you defend the Home,
You sacrifice 'Ease' for 'Attention,' and march like a metronome;
But of all elementary movements you learn in your Volunteer Corps
The one that is really perplexing is known as the Forming of Fours.

Imagine us numbered off from the right: the Sergeant faces the squad,
And says that the odd files do not move—I never seem to be odd!
And then his instructions run like this (very simple in black and white)—
'A pace to the rear with the left foot, and one to the right with the right.'

Of course if you don't think deeply, you do it without a hitch;
You have only to know your right and left, and remember which is which;
But as soon as you try to be careful, you get in the deuce of a plight,
With 'a pace to the right with the left foot, and one to the rear with the right!'

Besides, when you 're thoroughly muddled the Sergeant doubles your doubt

By saying that rules reverse themselves, as
soon as you 're 'turned about';
So round you go on your right heel, and
practise until you are deft
At 'pace to the front with the right foot,
and one to the left with the left.'

In my dreams the Sergeant, the Kaiser, and
Kipling mix my feet,
Saying 'East is left, and Right is Might, and
never the twain shall meet!'
In my nightmare squad *all* files are odd, and
their Fours are horribly queer,
With 'a pace to the left with the front foot,
and one to the right with the rear!'

—*Frank Sidgwick.*

'ALL THE HILLS AND VALES ALONG'

All the hills and vales along
Earth is bursting into song,
And the singers are the chaps
Who are going to die perhaps.
O sing, marching men,
Till the valleys ring again.
Give your gladness to earth's keeping,
So be glad, when you are sleeping.

Cast away regret and rue.
Think what you are marching to.
Little live, great pass.
Jesus Christ and Barabbas
Were found the same day.
This died, that went his way.
So sing with joyful breath.
For why, you are going to death.
Teeming earth will surely store
All the gladness that you pour.

Earth that never doubts nor fears,
Earth that knows of death, not tears,
Earth that bore with joyful ease
Hemlock for Socrates,
Earth that blossomed and was glad
'Neath the cross that Christ had,
Shall rejoice and blossom too
When the bullet reaches you.
Wherefore, men marching
On the road to death, sing!
Pour your gladness on earth's head,
So be merry, so be dead.

From the hills and valleys earth
Shouts back the sound of mirth,
Tramp of feet and lilt of song
Ringing all the road along.
All the music of their going,
Ringing, swinging, glad song-throwing,
Earth will echo still, when foot
Lies numb and voice mute.
On, marching men, on
To the gates of death with song.
Sow your gladness for earth's reaping,
So you may be glad, though sleeping.
Strew your gladness on earth's bed,
So be merry, so be dead.

—*Charles Hamilton Sorley.*

SAILOR, WHAT OF THE DEBT WE OWE YOU?

Sailor, what of the debt we owe you?
Day or night is the peril more?
Who so dull that he fails to know you,
Sleepless guard of our island shore?

Safe the corn to the farmyard taken;
Grain ships safe upon all the seas;
Homes in peace and a faith unshaken—
Sailor, what do we owe for these?

Safe the clerk at his desk; the trader
Counts unruined his honest gain;
Safe though yonder the curs't invader
Pours red death over hill and plain.

Sailor, what of the debt we owe you?
Now is the hour at last to pay,
Now in the stricken field to show you
What is the spirit you guard to-day.

—*Andrew John Stuart.*

A GIRL'S SONG

The Meuse and Marne have little waves;
The slender poplars o'er them lean.
One day they will forget the graves
That give the grass its living green.

Some brown French girl the rose will wear
That springs above his comely head;
Will twine it in her russet hair,
Nor wonder why it is so red.

His blood is in the rose's veins,
His hair is in the yellow corn.
My grief is in the weeping rains
And in the keening wind forlorn.

Flow softly, softly, Marne and Meuse;
Tread lightly all ye browsing sheep;

Fall tenderly, O silver dews,
For here my dear Love lies asleep.

The earth is on his sealèd eyes,
The beauty marred that was my pride;
Would I were lying where he lies,
And sleeping sweetly by his side!

The Spring will come by Meuse and Marne,
The birds be blithesome in the tree.
I heap the stones to make his cairn
Where many sleep as sound as he.

—*Katharine Tynan.*

FROM A FLEMISH GRAVEYARD

(January, 1915)

A year hence may the grass that waves
O'er English men in Flemish graves,
Coating this clay with green of peace
And softness of a year's increase,
Be kind and lithe as English grass
To bend and nod as the winds pass;
It was for grass on English hills
These bore too soon the last of ills.

And may the wind be brisk and clean,
And singing cheerfully between
The bents a pleasant-burdened song
To cheer these English dead along;
For English songs and English winds
Are they that bred these English minds.

And may the circumstantial trees
Dip, for these dead ones, in the breeze,
And make for them their silver play
Of spangled boughs each shiny day.
Thus may these look above, and see
And hear the wind in grass and tree,
And watch a lark in heaven stand,
And think themselves in their own land.

—*Iolo Aneurin Williams.*

THE FIRST BATTLE OF YPRES[1]

Gray field of Flanders, grim old battle-plain,
What armies held the iron line round Ypres in the rain,
From Bixschoote to Baecelaere and down to the Lys river?

Merry men of England,
Men of the green shires,
From the winding waters,
The elm-trees and the spires,
And the lone village dreaming in the downland yonder.
Half a million Huns broke over them in thunder,
Roaring seas of Huns swept on and sunk again,
Where fought the men of England round Ypres in the rain,
On the grim plain of Flanders, whose earth is fed with slaughter.

North-country fighting men from the mine and the loom,
Highlander and lowlander stood up to death and doom,
From Bixschoote to Baecelaere and down to the Lys river.

London men and Irish,
Indian men and French,
Charging with the bayonet,
Firing in the trench,
Fought in that furious fight, shoulder to shoulder.
Leapt from their saddles to charge in fierce disorder,
The Life Guards, mud and blood for the scarlet and the plume,
And they hurled back the foemen as the wind the sea spume,
From Bixschoote to Baecelaere and down to the Lys river.

But the huge Hun masses yet mounted more and more,
Like a giant wave gathering to whelm the sweet shore,
While swift the exultant foam runs on before and over.

Where that foam was leaping,
With bayonets, or with none,
The cooks and the service men
Ran upon the Hun.

1 Author's Note.— In the first battle of Ypres, which was fought in October–November, 1914, a thin line of British, supported on each wing by small bodies of French, stopped the push of an immense German army on Calais. The allusion in the latter part of the poem is not to "the angels of Mons," but to a story received from a very competent witness. On three occasions the Germans broke through our line, then paused and retired, for no apparent reason. On each of these occasions prisoners, when asked the cause of their retirement, replied: "We saw your enormous Reserves." We had no Reserves. This story was incidentally confirmed by the remark of another officer on the curious conduct of the Germans in violently shelling certain empty fields behind our lines.

The cooks and the service men charged and charged together
Moussy's cuirassiers, on foot, with spur and saber;
Helmed and shining fought they as warriors fought of yore—
Till calm fell sinister as the hush at the whirlwind's core,
From Bixschoote to Baecelaere and down to the Lys river.

Lo! the Emperor launched on us his guard of old renown,
Stepping in parade-march, as they step through Berlin town,
On the chill road to Gheluveldt, in the dark before the dawning.

Heavily tolled on them
Mortal mouths of guns,
Gallantly, gallantly
Came the flower of the Huns.
Proud men they marched, like an avalanche on us falling,
Prouder men they met, in the dark before the dawning.
Seven to one they came against us to shatter us and drown,
One to seven in the woodland we fought them up and down.
In the sad November woodland, when all the skies were mourning.

The long battle thundered till a waxing moon might wane,
Thrice they broke the exhausted line that held them on the plain,
And thrice like billows they went back, from viewless bounds retiring.

Why paused they and went backward,
With never a foe before
Like a long wave dragging
Down a level shore
Its fierce reluctant surges, that came triumphant storming
The land, and powers invisible drive to its deep returning?
On the gray field of Flanders again and yet again
The Huns beheld the Great Reserves on the old battle-plain,
The blood-red field of Flanders where all the skies were mourning.

The fury of their marshalled guns might plow no dreadful lane
Through those Reserves that waited in the ambush of the rain
On the riven plain of Flanders where hills of men lay moaning.

They hurled upon an army
The bellowing heart of Hell,
We saw but the meadows
Torn with their shot and shell.
We heard not the march of the succors that were coming,
Their old forgotten bugle-calls the fifes and the drumming,
But they gathered and they gathered from the graves where they had lain
A hundred years, hundreds of years, on the old battle-plain,
And the young graves of Flanders, all fresh with dews of mourning.

Marlborough's men and Wellington's, the burghers of Courtrai,
The warriors of Plantagenet, King Louis' *Gants glacés*—
And the young, young dead from Mons and the Marne River.

Old heroic fighting men,
Who fought for chivalry,
Men who died for England,
Mother of Liberty.
In the world's dim heart, where the waiting spirits slumber,
Sounded a roar when the walls were rent asunder
That parted Earth from Hell, and summoning them away,
Tremendous trumpets blew, as at the Judgment Day—
And the dead came forth, each to his former banner.

On the grim field of Flanders, the old battle plain,
Their armies held the iron line round Ypres in the rain,
From Bixschoote to Baecelaere and down to the Lys river.

—*Margaret L. Woods.*

NOTES

WORDSWORTH: PREFACE TO LYRICAL BALLADS

This preface, in which Wordsworth sets forth his theory of poetry, was prefixed to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1800, and enlarged and modified in subsequent issues to the shape in which it is here given.

A full commentary upon Wordsworth's poetic dogma will be found, considerably scattered, in Coleridge's *Biographial Literaria.* For Chapter XIV, see *Century Readings,* pp. 550-553.

Coleridge believed that Wordsworth's theories, rather than his practice, were responsible for much of the early hostility to Wordsworth's poems. "A careful and repeated examination of these confirms me in the belief, that the omission of less than a hundred lines would have precluded nine-tenths of the criticism on this work. . . . The men of business who had passed their lives chiefly in cities, and who might therefore be expected to derive the highest pleasure from acute notices of men and manners conveyed in easy, yet correct and pointed language; and all those who, reading but little poetry, are most stimulated with that species of it, which seems most distant from prose, would probably have passed by the volumes altogether. Others more catholic in their taste, and yet habituated to be most pleased when most excited, would have contented themselves with deciding, that the author had been successful in proportion to the elevation of his style and subject. . . .

"In the critical remarks, therefore, prefixed and annexed to the Lyrical Ballads, I believe, we may safely rest, as the true origin of the unexampled opposition which Mr. Wordsworth's writings have been since doomed to encounter." (*Biographia Litcraria,* Chap. IV.)

504. *b.* 27–9. *Catullus* (87–47 B. C.), Terence (c. 195–158 B. C.) and Lucretius (95–55 B. C.) belong to the earlier or classical period of Roman poetry; Statius (61–96 A. D.) and Claudian (fl. c. 400 A. D.) to the later or 'Silver Age.'

505. *a.* 13–43. *a selection of language,* etc. "To this I reply; that a rustic's language, purified from all provincialism and grossness, and so far re-constructed as to be made consistent with the rules of grammar—(which are in essence no other than the laws of universal logic, applied to psychological materials)—will not differ from the language of any other man of common sense, however learned or refined he may be, except as far as the notions, which the rustic has to convey, are fewer and more indiscriminate. This will become still clearer, if we add the consideration—(equally important though less obvious)—that the rustic, from the more imperfect development of his faculties, and from the lower state of their cultivation, aims almost solely to convey insulated facts, either those of his scanty experience or his traditional belief; while the educated man chiefly seeks to discover and express those connections of things, or those relative bearings of fact to fact, from which some more or less general law is deducible. For facts are valuable to a wise man, chiefly as they lead to the discovery of the indwelling law, which is the true being of things, the sole solution of their modes of existence, and in the knowledge of which consists our dignity and our power.

As little can I agree with the assertion, that from the objects with which the rustic hourly communicates the best part of language is formed. For first, if to communicate with an object implies such an acquaintance with it, as renders it capable of being discriminately reflected on, the distinct knowledge of an uneducated rustic would furnish a very scanty vocabulary. The few things and modes of action requisite for his bodily conveniences would alone be individualized; while all the rest of nature would be expressed by a small number of confused general terms. Secondly, I deny that the words and combinations of words derived from the objects, with which the rustic is familiar, whether with distinct or confused knowledge, can be justly said to form the best part of language. . . . The best part of human language, properly so called, is derived from reflection on the acts of the mind itself. It is formed by a voluntary appropriation of fixed symbols to internal acts, to processes and results of imagination, the greater part of which have no place in the consciousness of uneducated men; though in civilized society, by imitation and passive remembrance of what they hear from their religious instructors and other superiors, the most uneducated share in the harvest which they neither sowed, nor reaped. If the history of the phrases in hourly currency among our peasants were traced, a person not previously aware of the fact would be surprised at finding so large a number, which three or four centuries ago were the exclusive property of the universities and schools; and, at the commencement of the Reformation, had been transferred from the school to the pulpit, and thus gradually passed into common life." (*Biographia Literaria,* Chap. XVII.)

507. *b.* 50. *the language of prose and metrical composition.* See *Biographia Literaria,* Chap. XVIII, for Coleridge's correction of this doctrine.

510. *b.* 26. *Shakespere hath said. Hamlet* IV, iv, 37.

513. *a.* 5. *Clarissa Harlowe* (1748), Richardson's novel.

6. *The Gamester* (1753). A tragedy by Edward Moore portraying the horrors of gambling.

THE PRELUDE

This poem is so called because it was intended to be introductory to a great philosophical poem Wordsworth planned on retiring to the Lake District in 1799, 'with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary work that might live.' As a preliminary it seemed to him a reasonable thing 'that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far Nature and education had qualified him for such an employment. The philosophical poem was to be divided into three parts, and only one of these, *The Excursion,* was ever finished. But the introductory work, in which Wordsworth 'undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with

them,' was completed in 1805, although it was not published till 1850, after the poet's death, when it was given the title, *The Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind; an Autobiographical Poem.* Our extract is taken from Book I, which was begun at Goslar, in Germany, and finished in the first year or two of Wordsworth's settlement at Grasmere. Lines 101–163 were published in 1809 in Coleridge's periodical *The Friend.* The whole poem was addressed to Coleridge as 'a dear friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the author's intellect is deeply indebted.'

516. 2–4. Wordsworth was born at Cockermouth, in Cumberland, and in his ninth year was sent to Hawkshead Grammar School in the Vale of Esthwaite.

10. *springes,* snares. *Hamlet* I, iii, 115: 'Ay, springes to catch woodcocks.'

26. *the cultured Vale,* identified by Professor Knight with the neighbouring valley of Yewdale.

1. *object,* what we aimed at. *end,* what actually resulted.

40. *Dust as we are,* in spite of our mortal bodies.

57. *her,* Nature.

73. *elfin pinnace,* fairy bark. The 'craggy ridge' was probably Ironkeld, the 'huge peak' behind it Wetherlam; but there are other ridges and peaks about Esthwaite answering to Wordsworth's description. A similar impression may be obtained by rowing out into any lake surrounded by ridges with higher mountains behind them. It is the moral and spiritual interpretation of the impression that is Wordsworth's own.

80. *struck* with the oars.

517. 101–163. When Wordsworth published these lines in 1809 he gave them the title *Growth of Genius from the Influence of Natural Objects on the Imagination in Boyhood and Early Youth.*

101–114. The nominative of this whole sentence is 'thou,' referring to the 'Wisdom and Spirit of the universe,' addressed in the opening lines; the verb is 'didst intertwine', and lines 108–114 are an extension of this predicate. By intertwining the passions with Nature, the Divine Spirit purifies and ennobles them; the very emotions of pain and fear, awakened by contact with Nature, gain a touch of Nature's grandeur.

133–7. What is meant exactly by 'shod with steel' and 'games confederate'?

143. *an alien sound.* The weird echo from the distant hills seemed to come from another world.

150. *reflex,* the reflection of a star in the ice.

155. *spinning still.* To the swift skater, aided by the wind, the banks seem to be moving in the contrary direction, and their motion seems to continue for a moment or two even after he has stopped, the mental impression being retained.

LINES COMPOSED ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY

Wordsworth wrote of this poem, originally published in *Lyrical Ballads:* —'No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days with my sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol.'

The importance of this poem as an illustration of Wordsworth's view of Nature has been already touched on in the Introduction; but it cannot be urged too strongly. Myers says: —'To compare small things with great — or, rather, to compare great things with things vastly greater — the essential spirit of the *Lines near Tintern Abbey* was for practical purposes as new to mankind as the essential spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. Not the isolated expression of moral ideas, but their fusion into a whole in one memorable personality, is that which connects them for ever with a single name. Therefore it is that Wordsworth is venerated; because to so many men — indifferent, it may be, to literary or poetical effects, as such — he has shown by the subtle intensity of his own emotion how the contemplation of Nature can be made a revealing agency, like Love or Prayer — an opening, if indeed there be any opening, into the transcendent world.'

518. 1–2. Wordsworth's earlier visit was made, alone and on foot, in 1793.

3–5. The Wye Valley, above Tintern Abbey, is, perhaps, the most beautiful river scenery in England. Although only a few miles from the sea, the stream is free from the influence of the tide; and rocks, meadows, and wooded cliffs combine to make the scene one of romantic loveliness.

23–50. The memory has been a consolation to the poet amid the noise and loneliness of city life (23–31); it has given him, too, feelings of pleasure, which he no longer remembers, but which, he is sure, have had their influence on his moral character (31–36); and, finally, when perplexed by the mysteries of human life, he has been uplifted by the recollection of Nature's loveliness to a mood, in which the soul, endowed with spiritual insight, penetrates beyond material things to the secret of life, and sees with joy the divine harmony underlying the apparent contradictions of the world (36–50).

56. Have oppressed my spirits.

66–111. Wordsworth in this passage distinguishes three periods in his relation to Nature. In the first, Nature merely offered opportunity for boyish pleasures, such as bird-nesting, rowing, and skating, described in the extract from *The Prelude;* in the second he took delight in the forms and colors of the woods and mountains and the sound of the waterfalls — a delight of ey and ear only, for he was as yet insensible

> to the moods
> Of time and season, to the moral power,
> The affections and the spirit of the place.

In the third period, Nature had a moral and spiritual significance and helped him to understand the mystery of human life. The best commentary is a passage in *The Prelude* (Book VIII, 340–356), in which he sets forth the same succession of his delight in Nature — first, animal, second, sensuous; third, moral and contemplative.

519. 90–104. In this, which we have called the moral or contemplative period, Wordsworth sees

every object in Nature as pervaded by the Spirit of God. *The Prelude,* Book II, 396–409.

108. Wordsworth noted the resemblance of this line to Young's *Night-Thoughts,* in which it is said that 'Our *senses,* as our *reason,* are divine,' 'And half-create the wondrous world they see.'

110. In nature as revealed and interpreted by the senses.

114–122. Dorothy Wordsworth was a little younger than her brother, and even in her childhood was a refining influence in his life. See what he writes of her in *The Sparrow's Nest,* p. 527. From childhood they were separated until they were both over twenty, when Dorothy became, not only her brother's constant companion and helper, but a hallowing influence in the crisis of his life.

128. *inform,* mold, inspire.

152. *Of past existence,* of my own past life. Cf. 119–123.

STRANGE FITS OF PASSION

This and the four following poems belong to what is known as the 'Lucy' group of lyrics, written in Germany in 1799. Nothing is known of the English maiden so beautifully and devoutly enshrined; she may have existed only in the poet's imagination.

520. 2. *Dove,* a river in the English Midlands.

6. *diurnal course,* daily revolution.

MICHAEL

This poem was written in Oct.–Dec., 1800, largely at the sheep-fold in Green-head Ghyll, round which the subject is centered. Wordsworth said to Mr. Justice Coleridge that there was some foundation in fact, however slight, for every poem he had ever written of a narrative kind. '*Michael* was founded on the son of an old couple having become dissolute, and run away from his parents; and on an old shepherd having been seven years in building up a sheep-fold in a solitary valley.' He wrote on another occasion: —'In the two poems, *The Brothers* and *Michael,* I have attempted to draw a picture of the domestic affections, as I know they exist amongst a class of men who are now almost confined to the north of England. They are small independent *proprietors* of land, here called 'statesmen,' men of respectable education, who daily labor on their own little properties. The domestic affections will always be strong amongst men who live in a country not crowded with population, if these men are placed above poverty. But if they are proprietors of small estates which have descended to them from their ancestors, the power which these affections acquire amongst such men is inconceivable by those who have only had an opportunity of observing hired laborers, farmers, and the manufacturing poor. Their little tract of land serves as a kind of permanent rallying point for their domestic feelings, as a tablet on which they are written, which makes them objects of memory in a thousand instances, when they would otherwise be forgotten. It is a fountain fitted to the nature of social man, from which supplies of affection, as pure as his heart was intended for, are daily drawn. This class of men is rapidly disappearing.'

MY HEART LEAPS UP WHEN I BEHOLD

Wordsworth adopted the last three lines of this little poem (written in 1802) as the motto of the great Ode on Immortality, which was begun about a year later. 'Piety' is used in its original sense of 'reverence, affection.' The meaning is that the man should cherish the love of Nature he feels as a child, so that it may be a continuous inspiration, running through all his life. The sense in which 'the child is father of the man' is explained more fully in the Ode. (See p. 535.)

THE SPARROW'S NEST

Written at Grasmere in 1801. The nest was in the hedge of the garden at Cockermouth in which William and Dorothy Wordsworth played as children. In the poem as originally composed, l. 9 read: 'My sister Dorothy and I.' As to Dorothy Wordsworth see note on *Tintern Abbey,* 114–122, above.

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

Written at Grasmere, 1802. 'This old man I met a few hundred yards from my cottage; and the account of him is taken from his own mouth. I was in the state of feeling described in the beginning of the poem, while crossing over Barton fell from Mr. Clarkson's, at the foot of Ullswater, towards Askham. The image of the hare I then observed on the ridge of the fell.' (Wordsworth's note.)

528. 12. *plashy,* marshy, swampy, boggy.

43. *Chatterton.* See pp. 377 and 390.

45. *Him.* Burns. See p. 490.

TO A YOUNG LADY

Written 1802. The poem refers either to Dorothy Wordsworth or to Mary Hutchinson — probably to the former.

530. 17. *a Lapland night.* In the far north at a certain season of the year the sun does not sink below the horizon. The winter nights are often calm and still.

THE SOLITARY REAPER

Suggested to Wordsworth by the following sentence in the MS. of his friend Wilkinson's *Tours to the British Mountains:* 'Passed a female who was reaping along; she sang in Erse, as she bended over her sickle; the sweetest human voice I ever heard; her strains were tenderly melancholy, and felt delicious long after they were heard no more.'

YARROW UNVISITED

'At Clovenford, being so near to the Yarrow, we could not but think of the possibility of going thither, but came to the conclusion of reserving the pleasure for some future time, in consequence of which, after our return, William wrote the poem which I shall here transcribe.'— From Dorothy Wordsworth's *Recollections of a Tour made in Scotland,* 1803.

When Scott sent *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* to Wordsworth, the latter returned a copy of these verses by way of acknowledgment. Scott in reply

said: 'I by no means admit your apology, however ingeniously and artfully stated, for not visiting the bonny holms of Yarrow, and certainly will not rest until I have prevailed upon you to compare the ideal with the real stream. . . . I like your swan upon St. Mary's Lake. How came you to know that it is actually frequented by that superb bird?'

Wordsworth subsequently complained that Scott in one of his novels mis-quoted lines 43–44 of this poem, printing 'swans' instead of 'swan.' He added 'Never could I have written "swans" in the plural. The scene, when I saw it with its still and dim lake, under the dusky hills, was one of utter loneliness: there was *one swan*, and one only, stemming the water, and the pathetic loneliness of the region gave importance to the one companion of that swan, its own white image in the water. It was for that reason that I recorded the Swan and its Shadow. Had there been many swans and many shadows, they would have implied nothing as regards the character of that place: and I should have said nothing about them.'

530. 6. *Marrow,* companion. Dorothy Wordsworth.

20. *lintwhites,* linnets, small singing birds.

33. *holms,* flat and low-lying pieces of ground by a river, surrounded or submerged in time of flood.

531. 37. *Strath,* valley.

SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT

The subject of this poem, written in 1804, is Mary Hutchinson, whom Wordsworth had married two years before.

22. *machine.* This word has been objected to as unpoetical. But cf. *Hamlet* II, ii, 124: 'whilst this machine is to him?'

I WANDERED LONELY AS A CLOUD

Wordsworth says: 'The daffodils grew and still grow on the margin of Ullswater, and probably may be seen to this day as beautiful in the month of March, nodding their golden heads beside the dancing and foaming waves.'

Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal* has the following entry under April 15, 1802: 'When we were in the woods beyond Gowbarrow Park we saw a few daffodils close to the water-side. . . . As we went along there were more, and yet more; and, at last, under the boughs of the trees, we saw there was a long belt of them along the shore. . . . I never saw daffodils so beautiful. They grew among the mossy stones, about and above them; some rested their heads on these stones as on a pillow for weariness; and the rest tossed, and reeled, and danced, and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind that blew upon them over the lake. They looked so gay, ever glancing, ever changing.'

21–2. These lines, said by Wordsworth to be the best in the poem, were contributed by his wife. For the thought of this stanza cf. *Tintern Abbey,* lines 23–36.

TO A SKY-LARK

Cf. Shelley's poem with the same title (p. 627) and Meredith's *The Lark Ascending* (p. 960).

ELEGIAC STANZAS

There are two Peele Castles, one in the Isle of Man, the other on the coast of Lancashire. The latter is the one referred to in the poem, Wordsworth being known to have spent a four-weeks' vacation in its neighborhood.

ODE ON IMMORTALITY

Of this poem the very highest opinions have been expressed by competent judges. Principal Shairp says it 'marks the highest limit which the tide of poetic inspiration has reached in England . . . since the days of Milton.' It is, therefore, worthy of the most careful study. The best help to understanding it is given in Wordsworth's own note: — 'This was composed during my residence at Townend, Grasmere. Two years at least passed between the writing of the four first stanzas and the remaining part. To the attentive and competent reader the whole sufficiently explains itself; but there may be no harm in adverting here to particular feelings or *experiences* of my own mind on which the structure of the poem partly rests. Nothing was more difficult for me in childhood than to admit the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being. I have said elsewhere: —

> A simple child,
> That lightly draws its breath,
> And feels its life in every limb,
> What should it know of death?

But it was not so much from feelings of animal vivacity that *my* difficulty came as from a sense of the indomitableness of the spirit within me. I used to brood over the stories of Enoch and Elijah, and almost to persuade myself that, whatever might become of others, I should be translated, in something of the same way, to heaven. With a feeling congenial to this, I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality. At that time I was afraid of such processes. In later periods of life I have deplored, as we have all reason to do, a subjugation of an opposite character, and have rejoiced over the remembrances, as is expressed in the lines: —

> Obstinate questionings
> Of sense and outward things
> Fallings from us, vanishings, etc.

To that dream-like vividness and splendor which invest objects of sight in childhood, every one, I believe, if he would look back, could bear testimony, and I need not dwell upon it here; but having in the poem regarded it as presumptive evidence of a prior state of existence, I think it right to protest against a conclusion, which has given pain to some good and pious persons, that I meant to inculcate such a belief. It is far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith as more than an element in our instincts of immortality. But let us bear in mind that, though the idea is not advanced in revelation, there is nothing there to contradict it, and

the fall of man presents an analogy in its favour. Accordingly, a pre-existent state has entered into the popular creeds of many nations, and, among all persons acquainted with classic literature, is known as an ingredient in Platonic philosophy. Archimedes said that he could move the world if he had a point whereon to rest his machine. Who has not felt the same aspirations as regards the world of his own mind? Having to wield some of its elements when I was impelled to write this poem on the "Immortality of the Soul," I took hold of the notion of pre-existence as having sufficient foundation in humanity for authorizing me to make for my purpose the best use of it I could as a poet.'

Wordsworth's view of childish reminiscences of a previous existence was, however, probably not suggested by Plato, but by the seventeenth century poet Vaughan, in *Childhood* and *The Retreat*. See p. 185.

534. 4. Cf. lines 4–5 of the *Sonnet Composed upon Westminster Bridge* (p. 538), and *Elegiac Stanzas* 14–16 (p. 532)

13. *bare*, of clouds.

535. 21. *tabor*, a small drum.

22 *a thought of grief*, the thought expressed in the last two lines of the preceding stanza.

26. *wrong*, offend by lack of sympathy.

28. *the fields of sleep*, 'from the dark beyond the dawn,' or possibly 'from the sleeping [*i.e.*, quiet] fields.'

40. *coronal*, garland.

56–7 Cf lines 4–5 and note above.

72. *Nature's Priest*, the Minister and Interpreter of the Divinity

81 *homely*, humble — in contrast with the glories of man's divine origin.

85–9. Probably suggested by the sight of Hartley Coleridge, to whom Wordsworth addressed a poem *To H. C., Six Years Old*, beginning: 'O thou whose fancies from afar are brought.'

102–7 Referring to Shakspere's well-known lines in *As You Like It*. II, vii, 139–166, 'All the world 's a stage.' etc.

536. 112 *the eternal deep* the deep mysteries of eternity.

126. *earthly freight*, 'burden of earthly cares.' (Webb.)

132. *fugitive*, evanescent, quickly disappearing.

141–5. Professor Bonamy Price, walking one day with Wordsworth by the side of Rydal Water, asked him the meaning of these lines: — 'The venerable old man raised his aged form erect; he was walking in the middle, and passed across me to a five-barred gate in the wall which bounded the road on the side of the lake. He clenched the top bar firmly with his right hand, pushed strongly against it, and then uttered these ever-memorable words, "There was a time in my life when I had to push against something that resisted, to be sure that there was anything outside of me. I was sure of my own mind; everything else fell away and vanished into thought." Thought he was sure of; matter for him, at the moment, was an unreality.'

181. *primal sympathy*, the child's intuitive sympathy with Nature.

183–4. Cf. *Tintern Abbey*, lines 92–5 (p. 518).

185. *through*, beyond.

189. *yet*, still, even now.

196–9. The sunset has no longer 'a celestial light, the glory and the freshness of a dream,' but suggests serious reflections to the Man who has pondered on the issues of Life and Death. The poet's final thought is that acquaintance with the world, while robbing Nature of its first glory, increases its significance by awakening sympathy with the joys and sorrows of humanity. Professor Dowden has well observed that the last two lines of the *Ode* are 'often quoted as an illustration of Wordsworth's sensibility to external nature; in reality, they testify to his enriching the sentiment of nature with feeling derived from the heart of man and from the experience of human life.'

NUNS FRET NOT

537. 3. *pensive citadels*, refuges in which they can think, secure from interruption.

6. *Furness-fells*, the hills of the district of Furness, in or near which Wordsworth spent the greater part of his life.

8–9. Cf. Lovelace, *To Althea from Prison*, p. 182.

PERSONAL TALK, III

13. Desdemona in *Othello*.

14. See Spenser *Faery Queen*, II. 27 ff. (p. 110).

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE

Wordsworth appears to have been mistaken as to the date he assigned to this sonnet, which was written when he left London for Dover on his way to Calais early in the morning of July 30th, 1802. The following is the entry in his sister's diary under that date: 'Left London between five and six o'clock of the morning outside the Dover coach. A beautiful morning. The city, St. Paul's, with the river — a multitude of little boats, made a beautiful sight as we crossed Westminster Bridge; the houses not overhung by their clouds of smoke, and were spread out endlessly; yet the sun shone so brightly, with such a pure light, that there was something like the purity of one of Nature's own grand spectacles.'

IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING

538. 9. *Dear Child!* Dorothy Wordsworth.

12. *Abraham's bosom*. In the presence of God. See Luke xvi, 22.

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC

1–2. At the beginning of the thirteenth century the Venetians, with the help of France, captured Constantinople, and added to their dominions a large part of the Eastern Empire. They protected Western Europe from the incursions of the Turks for centuries.

4. Venice was founded in the fifth century in the marshes of the Adriatic by inhabitants of the mainland who fled before the conquering Huns under Attila.

7–8. The Venetians having protected Pope Alexander III against the German Emperor, whom they defeated in a sea fight in 1177, the Pope gave the Doge a ring and bade him wed with it the Adriatic that posterity might know that the sea was subject

to Venice, 'as a bride is to her husband.' The ceremony was observed annually by a solemn naval procession, after which the Doge threw a ring into the sea.

9–14. Venice was robbed of much of her power in 1508 by the League of Cambrai, but the real cause of her decay was the discovery of the New World, which made the Atlantic the highway of trade instead of the Mediterranean, and shifted the commercial center from Italy to England and Holland. The Republic, however, remained free and independent, though greatly enfeebled, until 1797, when Austria and France divided its territory between them. Venice remained under Austrian dominion (except for brief intervals) until it became a part of the kingdom of Italy in 1866.

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE

This sonnet was written in August, 1802, when Toussaint L'Ouverture, the liberator of St. Domingo, was lying in prison at Paris, where he died a few months later. He was born in 1743, the child of African slaves, and showed great political and military ability; but he was unable to resist the French fleet sent against him by Napoleon, who re-established slavery in the island in 1801.

TO THE MEN OF KENT

Written when Britain was in fear of a Napoleonic invasion.

539. 4. *hardiment,* hardihood, courage.

540. 10. *from the Norman,* at the battle of Hastings, 1066.

ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND

Switzerland was conquered by the French in 1798, and three of its cantons were annexed to the Republic. The sonnet appears to have been suggested by the Act of Mediation, by which Napoleon arranged for the government of Switzerland in 1803; he became Emperor a few months afterwards, and at the time the sonnet was written had made himself master of Europe, England alone having resisted him successfully. It was the attack upon the liberties of Switzerland which gave the final blow to the French sympathies of both Coleridge and Wordsworth, and united them with their fellow-countrymen in antagonism to Napoleon.

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

13–14. Proteus and Triton were sea-deities in the old Greek mythology. Wordsworth means that he would rather be a heathen with some sense of the Divinity in Nature than a professed Christian whose heart is so given to the pursuit of wealth and worldly ambition that he is out of harmony with the beautiful sights and sounds of land and sea.

THE RIVER DUDDON

This is the concluding sonnet of a beautiful series which Wordsworth wrote under the above title. The Duddon is a small stream which rises on the borders of Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Lancashire, and flows into the Irish Sea.

KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL

This beautiful chapel was built by Henry VI for the scholars of the College, which up to a few years ago was reserved to students from Eton.

CONTINUED

541. 4. *Westminster* Abbey.

8. *younger Pile.* St. Paul's Cathedral, built by Sir Christopher Wren in the seventeenth century. It is a more modern structure than the Abbey, and contains the ashes of many great men for whom room could not be found in the older national burial place. It is surmounted by a great dome and cross.

ON THE DEPARTURE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT

This was the journey which Scott took in the hope of recovery from what proved to be his last illness. Abbotsford, on the Tweed, was his home.

3. *Eildon,* three hills near Abbotsford, famous in Scottish legend.

14. *Parthenope,* one of the Sirens, said to be burned at Naples.

'THERE!' SAID A STRIPLING

'Mossgiel was thus pointed out to me by a young man on the top of the coach on my way from Glasgow to Kilmarnock.' (Wordsworth's note.)

9. *bield,* lodging, dwelling, place of shelter.

CONCLUSION

This and the former sonnet were among the 'Poems composed or suggested during a tour in the summer of 1833,' published two years later.

COLERIDGE: BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA

543. *a.* 24. *The Friend.* A periodical published by Coleridge in 1809–10.

544. *b.* 37. *stamp tax,* levied at this time upon all newspapers and weekly periodicals.

39. *a war against freedom,* against France.

54. *ad normam Platonis,* after the rule of Plato, the Greek philosopher.

κατ'ἔμφασιν, in appearance rather than reality.

545. *a.* 26. *pingui-nitescent,* shining with fat.

b. 1. *Phileleutheros,* lover of freedom.

31. *ambrosial,* heavenly.

546. *a.* 19. *Orpheus,* the musician of classical mythology whose strains persuaded even stones and trees to follow him.

24. *illuminati,* illuminated or inspired ones.

547. *a.* 1. *Jacobinism,* revolutionary principle. Jacobin means, originally, a friar of the order of St. Dominic. Hence one of a faction in the French revolution, so called from the *Jacobin* club, which first met in the hall of the Jacobin friars in Paris, Oct. 1789.

8. *The Watchman* ran from March 1 to May 13, 1796.

30. *text from Isaiah.* 'My bowels shall sound like an harp.' xvi, 11.

36. *psilosophy.* See 544. *b.* 57.

46. *gagging bills.* The bills introduced into Parliament to restrict public meetings and the freedom of the press.

b. 1. *melioration,* improvement.

21. *a dear friend.* Thomas Poole.

29. *first revolutionary war,* against the French revolutionists.

44. *Stowey.* In Somersetshire.

46. *morning paper. The Post.*

548. *a.* 25. *a poet.* Wordsworth came to Stowey in July, 1797.

53. *Quidnunc,* an idle gossip, continually asking 'what now?'

55. *Dogberry,* the pompous, ignorant constable of *Much Ado about Nothing.*

57. *pour surveillance of,* to exercise supervision over.

b. 25. *Spy Nozy,* the great Jewish philosopher Spinoza (1632--1677), in whose teaching Wordsworth and Coleridge were greatly interested.

26. *a remarkable feature,* a red nose.

552. *a.* 3. *Anacreon,* Greek lyric poet of the sixth century B. C.

b. 34. *Bishop Taylor.* See p. 221.

35. *Burnet* (1635–1715), a distinguished philosopher and divine. His *Sacred Theory of the Earth* is a fanciful and ingenious speculation.

553. *a.* 47. *Sir John Davies* (1570–1626).

THE ANCIENT MARINER

The circumstances under which this poem was written and published have been already related (see p. 503). Some further particulars of the suggestions made by Wordsworth may here be given, from his own account:

'In the autumn of 1797 Mr. Coleridge, my sister and myself started from Alfoxden pretty late in the afternoon with a view to visit Linton and the Valley of Stones near to it; and as our united funds were very small, we agreed to defray the expense of the tour by writing a poem, to be sent to the *New Monthly Magazine.* Accordingly we set off and proceeded along the Quantock Hills towards Watchet; and in the course of this walk was planned the poem of the "Ancient Mariner," founded on a dream, as Mr. Coleridge said, of his friend Mr. Cruikshank. Much the greatest part of the story was Mr. Coleridge's invention, but certain parts I suggested.

'For example, some crime was to be committed which should bring upon the Old Navigator, as Coleridge afterwards delighted to call him, the spectral persecution, as a consequence of that crime, and his own wanderings. I had been reading in Shelvocke's *Voyages* a day or two before that, while doubling Cape Horn, they frequently saw albatrosses in that latitude, the largest sort of sea-fowl, some extending their wings twelve or thirteen feet. "Suppose," said I, "you represent him as having killed one of these birds on entering the South Sea, and that the tutelary spirits of these regions take upon them to avenge the crime." The incident was thought fit for the purpose, and adopted accordingly. I also suggested the navigation of the ship by the dead men, but do not recollect that I had anything more to do with the scheme of the poem. The gloss with which it was subsequently accompanied was not thought of by either of us at the time; at least not a hint of it was given to me, and I have no doubt it was a gratuitous afterthought. We began the composition together on that, to me, memorable evening. I furnished two or three lines at the beginning of the poem, in particular: —

> And listened like a three years' child:
> The Mariner had his will.'

Coleridge seems later to have had doubts whether Wordsworth's suggestion of moral responsibility was consistent with the imaginative character of the poem as a whole. He is reported as saying in his *Table Talk* on May 31, 1830: —'Mrs. Barbauld once told me that she admired *The Ancient Mariner* very much, but that there were two faults in it,— it was improbable, and had no moral. As for the probability, I owned that that might admit some question; but as to the want of a moral, I told her that in my own judgment the poem had too much; and that the only, or chief fault, if I might say so, was the obtrusion of the moral sentiment so openly on the reader as a principle or cause of action in a work of pure imagination. It ought to have had no more moral than the *Arabian Nights'* tale of the merchant's sitting down to eat dates by the side of a well and throwing the shells aside, and lo! a genie starts up and says he *must* kill the aforesaid merchant *because* one of the date shells had, it seems, put out the eye of the genie's son.'

A marginal gloss was added by Coleridge in the edition of 1817, together with a Latin motto from Burnet, of which the following is a translation: — 'I readily believe that there are more invisible beings in the universe than visible. But who shall explain to us the nature, the rank and kinship, the distinguishing marks and graces of each? What do they do? Where do they dwell? The human mind has circled round this knowledge, but never attained to it. Yet there is profit, I do not doubt, in sometimes contemplating in the mind, as in a picture, the image of a greater and better world: lest the intellect, habituated to the petty details of daily life, should be contracted within too narrow limits and settle down wholly on trifles. But, meanwhile, a watchful eye must be kept on truth, and proportion observed, that we may distinguish the certain from the uncertain, day from night.'

It has been thought that Coleridge took some hints from the *Strange and Dangerous Voyage* of Captain Thomas James (London, 1633), and from an earlier story of Saint Paulinus, but his borrowings from these sources were certainly slight. The invention of the subject, as well as its imaginative treatment, is substantially his own.

553. 11. *loon,* an idle, stupid, worthless fellow.

12. *eftsoons,* forthwith, immediately. These obsolete words are used to recall the style of the old ballads, which Coleridge was trying to revive, and to suggest that the time of the story was somewhat remote. What other words in Part I produce the same impression?

Notice what a vivid picture of the Mariner is brought before the mind by the mention of successive details of his personal appearance.

23–4. As the ship sailed further away from the harbor, first the church, then the hill, and last the top of the lighthouse upon the hill disappeared from view.

25. If the sun rose on the left, in what direction was the ship sailing?

554. 29–30. At the equator the noon sun is never far out of the perpendicular, and during the equinoxes it is directly overhead. See lines 111–114.

32. *bassoon.* This particular detail was probably suggested to Coleridge by the fact that during his residence at Stowey, his friend, Poole, added a bassoon to the instruments used in the village church.

36. *minstrelsy,* band of minstrels.

41. *drawn* (in the marginal note) seems to be a printer's mistake for 'driven,' but it is the reading given in all the editions during Coleridge's lifetime.

46–48. Write out this metaphor in your own words so as to make sure that you understand it.

55–57. *clifts,* cliffs. *sheen,* brightness, splendour. *ken,* see, discern. Compare notes above on lines 10–11.

58. *between* the ship and the land.

62. *in a swound,* heard in a swoon.

75. *shroud,* a rope running from the mast-head to the ship's side.

76. *vesper,* (Latin) evening; in its plural form the term is usually applied to the evening service of the Roman Catholic church.

81. *crossbow.* This suggests that the time of the story was at the end of the sixteenth or beginning of the seventeenth century, when the crossbow was still in common use.

83. Why 'upon the right?' The reader should trace the voyage of the ship on a map; it must have been now about nine days' sail from a point between Cape Horn and the South Pole.

98. *uprist,* used instead of 'uprose' (as 'eat' instead of 'eaten' in line 67) to give the suggestion of language of the olden time.

104. In the edition of 1817 Coleridge altered this line to read

> The furrow streamed off free,

and added in a footnote: 'In the former edition the line was —

> The furrow followed free;

but I had not been long on board a ship before I perceived that this was the image as seen by a spectator from the shore, or from another vessel. From the ship itself the *wake* appears like a brook flowing off from the stern.' But in 1828 and after, the original reading was restored.

107. Notice the sudden check in the verse at the end of this line, and the contrast with the swift movement of the preceding stanza.

555. 128. *death-fires,* phosphorescent lights, to which the sailors attached a superstitious significance.

139. *well-a-day,* an antique exclamation of lament, as 'gramercy' in line 164 is of joy and thankfulness.

152. *wist,* knew. See notes above on use of old words.

164. 'I took the thought of *"grinning for joy"* from poor Burnett's remark to me, when we had climbed to the top of Plinlimmon, and were nearly dead with thirst. We could not speak for the constriction, till we found a little puddle under a stone. He said to me, "You grinned like an idiot!" He had done the same.' (*Table Talk.*)

184. *gossameres,* fine spider-threads.

185–9. Coleridge made considerable alterations, omissions and additions in this part of the poem after it was first published. Another version of this stanza reads:

> 'Are those *her* ribs which flecked the sun
> Like bars of a dungeon grate?
> Are these two all, all of the crew,
> That woman and her mate?'

And he left the following additional stanza in manuscript:

> 'This ship it was a plankless thing
> A bare Anatomy!
> A plankless Spectre — and it moved
> Like a being of the Sea!
> The woman and a fleshless man
> Therein sate merrily.'

197. What is it that the Woman Life-in-Death has won, and what difference does this make to the story?

199–200. A fine description of the sudden darkness of the tropics.

556. 209–11. A star within the lower tip of the crescent moon is never seen. This is Coleridge's imaginative way of using what he describes in a manuscript note as the 'common superstition among sailors that something evil is about to happen whenever a star dogs the moon.'

223. Notice at the end of each part the repeated reference to the crime the Ancient Mariner has committed.

226–7. 'For the last two lines of this stanza I am indebted to Mr. Wordsworth. It was on a delightful walk from Nether Stowey to Dulverton, with him and his sister, in the autumn of 1797, that this poem was planned and in part composed.'— Coleridge's note in the edition of 1817.

254. *reek,* give off vapor.

267–8. The white moonlight, as if in mockery, covered the hot sea with a sheen like that of April hoar frost.

294. Note this and other indications that the religious setting of the poem is Roman Catholic — another way of suggesting the atmosphere of antiquity.

557. 297. The buckets looked *silly* because they had stayed so long dry and useless.

302. *dank,* wet.

314. *sheen,* bright. The reference seems to be to the Polar Lights, known in the Northern Hemisphere as the Aurora Borealis.

319. *sedge,* coarse grass growing in a swamp.

333. *had been* (subjunctive mood), would have been.

558. 394. *I have not* the power; I cannot.

435. *charnel-dungeon,* a vault for the bones of the dead.

559. 489. *rood,* cross.

512. *shrieve* (usually pronounced and written 'shrive') to absolve after confession.

524. *trow,* trust, believe, think.

535. *ivy-tod,* ivy-bush.

560. 575. *crossed his brow,* made the sign of the cross on his forehead to warn off evil spirits.

623. *of sense forlorn,* one who has lost his senses.

CHRISTABEL

Christabel was begun in 1797–8, and continued in 1800. Scot heard it recited while it was still in manuscript, and the melody of the verse made such an impression on his mind that he adopted it for *The Lay of the Last Minstrel. Christabel* in its fragmentary state was printed in 1816; Coleridge said in 1821, 'Of my poetic works I would fain finish *Christabel,*' but he never succeeded in doing so. It remains, however, one of the most wonderful and beautiful poems of the Romantic Revival.

564. 408–426. Said by Coleridge to be 'the best and sweetest lines I ever wrote.'

KUBLA KHAN

In a note to this poem on its publication in 1816, Coleridge relates the circumstances of its composition. Being in ill-health, he had retired to a lonely farmhouse on Exmoor, and an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment that he was reading the following sentence from the old book of travels known as *Purchas his Pilgrimage:*—'In Xamdu did Cublai Can build a stately palace, encompassing sixteen miles of plain ground with a wall, wherein are fertile meadows, pleasant springs, delightful streams, and all sorts of beasts of chase and game, and in the midst thereof a sumptuous house of pleasure.' Coleridge adds:—'The Author continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as *things,* with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink, and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him above an hour, and on his return to his room, found, to his no small surprise and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone had been cast, but, alas without the after restoration of the latter!'

Kubla Khan in the thirteenth century founded the Mogul dynasty in China, and made Pekin the capital of his empire, which was the largest that has ever existed in Asia. He was an enlightened but ambitious ruler, very fond of pomp and splendor.

565. 13. *athwart a cedarn cover,* across a cedar wood.

41. *Abora,* apparently a mountain of Coleridge's imagination.

FROST AT MIDNIGHT

Mrs. Coleridge was wont to complain to her friends that her husband '*would* walk up and down composing poetry instead of coming to bed at proper hours.' This poem was the outcome of a midnight meditation in his cottage at Stowey in February, 1798, and was published in the same year.

566. 27. *stranger,* a film of soot sticking to the bars of the grate, which, according to a common English superstition, betokens the coming of a visitor.

29–30. As to Coleridge's birth and school days, see Life, p. 542.

38. *stern preceptor.* Coleridge, in his *Biographia Literaria,* says: 'At school I enjoyed the inestimable advantage of a very sensible, though at the same time, a very severe master.' He goes on to speak at length of Boyer's merits as a teacher, 'whose severities, even now, not seldom furnish the dreams, by which the blind fancy would fain interpret to the mind the painful sensations of distempered sleep; but neither lessen nor dim the deep sense of my moral and intellectual obligations.' Coleridge writes also in his *Table Talk:* 'The discipline at Christ's Hospital in my time was ultra Spartan; all domestic ties were to be put aside. "Boy!" I remember Boyer saying to me once when I was crying the first day of my return after the holidays, "Boy! the school is your father! Boy! the school is your mother! Boy! the school is your brother! Boy! the school is your sister! the school is your first cousin, and your second cousin, and all the rest of your relations! Let 's have no more crying!"' Coming under the influence of Voltaire, Coleridge professed himself an infidel. 'So, sirrah, you are an infidel, are you?' said Boyer; 'then I 'll flog your infidelity out of you!' Coleridge said it was the 'only just flogging he ever received.'

43–44. Coleridge was very fond of his sister Ann, who was five years older than himself and had been his playmate when he was still in petticoats. She died in 1791, to his great grief.

52–54. At Christ's Hospital Coleridge used to lie on the roof and gaze upon the clouds and stars.

55–65. There was no likelihood at this time that Coleridge would live in the Lake District, but he fulfilled his own prophecy in 1800 by removing to Greta Hall, Keswick, from which he writes, soon after his settlement there, of his little son's enjoyment of nature: 'I look at my doted-on Hartley — he moves, he lives, he finds impulses from within and from without, he is the darling of the sun and the breeze. Nature seems to bless him as a thing of her own. He looks at the clouds, the mountains, the living beings of the earth, and vaults and jubilates.'

HUMILITY THE MOTHER OF CHARITY

The date appended to this poem is that of composition.

EPITAPH

This poem like the preceding bears the date of its composition.

LAMB: THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES

This was writen in Jan., 1798, at the time of the central tragedy of Lamb's life, the poem in its original form beginning: —

'Where are they gone, the old familiar faces?
I had a mother, but she died and left me,
Died prematurely in a day of horrors —
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.'

The last stanza began with the word 'For,' and the words 'And some are taken from me' in l. 20 were italicized, referring no doubt to Mary Lamb, whose illness was probably the occasion of the poem. The 'friend' of l. 10 was Charles Lloyd, with whom Lamb had a temporary difference about this time; the 'more than brother' of l. 16, Coleridge.

MACKERY END, IN HERTFORDSHIRE

All these essays appeared in the *London Magazine*, 1821–22, and were afterwards included in the *Essays of Elia*.

Mackrye End may now be easily reached from Wheathampstead Station on the Great Northern Railway. The old farmhouse, with some additions since Lamb's day, is still standing.

568. *a.* 4. *Bridget Elia,* Mary Lamb. See biographical sketch, p. 567.

12. *the rash king's offspring,* Jephthah's daughter. Judges xi, 30–40.

15. *'with a difference.'* Ophelia in *Hamlet* IV, v. 183, 'O, you must wear your rue with a difference.'

17. *bickerings,* little quarrels.

20. *dissembling,* simulating. This is contrary to the established usage, according to which dissemble is to pretend not to be something that you are.

26. *Burton,* the author of *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621).

33. *a story.* Mary Lamb's passion for novel-reading is spoken of by others.

39. *humors,* eccentricities.

43. *bizarre,* whimsical, fantastic.

46. *'holds Nature more clever'* — a quotation from Gay, *Epitaph of Bycwords.*

48. *obliquities,* irregularities.

49. *Religio Medici,* the chief work of Sir Thomas Browne, whose curious notions and elaborate style made him a favorite with Lamb. See p. 200.

52. *intellectuals,* reasoning powers, intelligence.

b. 1. *Margaret Newcastle,* an eccentric Restoration noblewoman, of high character and remarkable talents, for whom Lamb often expressed his admiration.

34. *derogatory,* disparaging.

42. *stuff of the conscience,* quoted from *Othello* I, ii, 2.

50. *good old English reading,* in the library of Samuel Salt of the Inner Temple.

569. *a.* 18. *beat up the quarters of,* arouse, disturb, visit unceremoniously. The expression is used in exactly the same way by Richardson in *Pamela.*

20. *corn country.* Hertfordshire is mainly agricultural and grows a large quantity of wheat.

35. *substantial yeoman,* well-to-do farmer.

b. 13. *'heart of June,'* quoted from Ben Jonson.

14. *the poet,* Wordsworth. See *Yarrow Visited,* stanza 6, 'than which' (Lamb wrote to Wordsworth) 'I think no lovelier stanza can be found in the wide world of poetry.'

21. *waking bliss,* conscious enjoyment, less like a dream; quoted from Milton's *Comus.*

570. *a.* 5. *gossamer,* spider thread. *rending,* separating.

14. *the two scriptural cousins,* Mary and Elizabeth. Luke i, 39–40.

23. *B. F.,* Baron Field, an English barrister, who in 1816 became Judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales. To him Lamb addressed the Elia essay entitled *Distant Correspondents.*

24. *peradventure,* by chance.

26. *The fatted calf.* See the Parable of the Prodigal Son, Luke xv, 23.

43. *astoundment,* intense surprise.

50. *I forget all this.* A reminiscence of Psalm cxxxvii, 5: 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.'

DREAM-CHILDREN: A REVERIE

The death of Lamb's brother John on Oct. 26, 1821, appears to have suggested the tender vein of reminiscence and musing on 'what might have been' in this essay, which is justly regarded as one of the most delicate in pathos and perfect in workmanship Lamb ever wrote. But this kind of reverie was not unusual with him. He writes in an earlier essay (*New Year's Eve*): 'Being without wife or family . . . and having no offspring of my own to dally with, I turn back upon memory, and adopt my own early idea, as my heir and favorite.'

b. 11. *Norfolk.* Lamb's grandmother, Mary Field, was housekeeper for more than fifty years at Blakesware in Hertfordshire, the seat of the Plumers, described in the Elia essay, *Blakesmoor in H——shire.* William Plumer, who lived in another family seat (also in Hertfordshire), and dismantled Blakesware, was still living when *Dream-Children* was published, and this may have been the reason why Lamb altered the name of the county to Norfolk, the scene of the legend of the children in the wood.

23. *Robin Redbreasts,* which at the end of the ballad cover the bodies of the murdered children with leaves.

50. *tawdry,* showy, pretentious and yet worthless.

571. *a.* 3. *Psaltery,* the Psalms. Psalter is the more usual and correct form.

5. *spread her hands,* in amazement at such learning.

14. *cancer,* the actual cause of Mrs. Field's death.

21. *apparition of two infants.* There was a legend in the Plumer family about the mysterious disappearance of two children in the seventeenth century.

36. *the old busts.* These were among the things removed by Mr. Plumer from Blakesware.

49. *nectarines,* a variety of peach thought particularly delicious.

52. *forbidden fruit.* See Genesis ii, 16–17, and the opening lines of *Paradise Lost.*

b. 3. *basking,* lying in the sun; originally a Norse word, meaning 'to bathe one's self.'

11. *impertinent,* because the pike eats dace. It is a sluggish fish, while dace are very lively.

20. *irrelevant,* not to the purpose, not worth attention.

30. *mettlesome,* high-spirited.

43. *a lame-footed boy.* It is not known whether Lamb was ever temporarily lame in boyhood. John Lamb's lameness was caused by the fall of a stone in 1796, just before the tragedy which made such a difference in Charles Lamb's life. Writing to Coleridge just afterwards he says: 'I had the whole weight of the family thrown on me; for my brother, little disposed (I speak not without tenderness for him) at any time to take care of old age and infirmities, had now, with his bad leg, an exemption from such duties, and I was now left alone.' John Lamb was self-indulgent, and in manhood they saw little of each other, but Charles felt his loss severely, as is shown by the letters he wrote at the time. A fuller account of John Lamb, written before his death, will be found in the Elia essay, *My Relations.*

572. *a.* 13. *took off his limb.* This is a detail supplied from Lamb's imagination.

22. *Alice W——n,* Winterton in Lamb's Key, but he adds that it is a feigned name. The real name of the village girl 'with the bright yellow Hertfordshire hair, and eye of watchet hue' was probably Ann Simmons. She seems to have lived in one of the cottages near Blakesware and married Mr. Bartram, or Bartrum, a London pawnbroker. Lamb probably idealized this youthful passion, which, if his 'seven long years' are to be taken literally, must have begun when he was a boy of fourteen. He writes in *New Year's Eve:* 'I would scarce now have any of those untoward accidents and events of my life reversed. I would no more alter them than the incidents of some well-contrived novel. Methinks it is better that I should have pined away seven of my goldenest years, when I was thrall to the fair hair, and fairer eyes, of Alice W——n, than that so passionate a love-adventure should be lost.'

25. *difficulty,* shyness, reserve, reluctance to be won.

28. *representment,* re-incarnation.

31. *whose, i.e.,* the first or the second Alice's.

42. *might have been,* if he had married Alice.

44. *Lethe,* the river of Hades, which made those who drank of it completely forget their past life. Virgil in the *Æneid* (VI, 703–751) says that after thousands of years the soul, having drunk of Lethe, returns to earth in another body. Some such far-off incarnation is all that is possible for the creations of the dreamer's imagination.

49. *Bridget . . . James Elia,* the names given by Lamb to his sister and brother in *My Relations.*

50. *gone for ever.* This was the only part of the dream that remained true.

A CHAPTER ON EARS

Lamb exaggerates his lack of appreciation for music in this essay, as in his verses, *Free Thoughts on Several Eminent Composers,* beginning:

> 'Some cry up Haydn, some Mozart,
> Just as the whim bites; for my part
> I do not care a farthing candle
> For either of them, or for Handel.'

As a matter of fact he was a fervent admirer of Braham, whose singing of Handel's oratorio, *Israel in Egypt,* is commended in the essay on *Imperfect Sympathies.* Lamb wrote of this great singer: 'He was a rare composition of the Jew, the gentleman, and the angel; yet all these elements mixed up so kindly in him that you could not tell which preponderated.'

b. 3. *volutes,* spiral ornaments at the sides of the capital or top of Ionic and Corinthian pillars.

6. *conduits,* channels, usually for water, here for sound.

8. *the mole* has small ears but keen hearing.

9. *labyrinthine,* winding, intricate.

10. *side-intelligencers,* side passages, conveying information to the brain.

13. *to draw upon assurance,* to rely upon impudence.

14. *'quite unabashed.'* Lamb gave the reference in a foot-note in the *London Magazine* to Pope's *Dunciad* (II, 147):

> 'Earless on high stood unabashed Defoe.'

15. *upon that article,* in that particular.

17. *pillory,* a frame in which the offender's head and hands were fixed in an uncomfortable and helpless position while he was exposed to the jeers and insults of the mob. This mode of punishment was practised in Great Britain up to the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign. Defoe was subjected to it for his satirical tract, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (see p. 287), but the barbarous practice of cutting off the ears, which often accompanied exposure in the pillory, was in his case not carried out.

23. *concourse of sweet sounds. The Merchant of Venice* V, i, 83–5.

24. *'Water parted from the sea.'* This and *'In infancy'* are both songs from Arne's opera *Artaxerxes,* Lamb's *First Play.*

27. *harpsichord,* the forerunner of the modern pianoforte.

32. *Mrs. S——,* not identified beyond the name 'Spinkes' given in Lamb's Key.

42. *Alice W——n.* See notes to *Dream Children* above.

56. *A.,* William Ayrton, a well-known musical critic of the time.

573. *a.* 29. *Sostenuto and adagio,* Italian musical terms indicating that a passage is to be played in a 'sustained' or 'leisurely' manner.

31. *Sol, Fa, Mi, Re,* names of notes used in singing.

32. *conjuring,* mysterious, magical. *Baralipton,* a meaningless word invented by the scholastic philosophers for the purpose of exercises in logic.

37. *Jubal* 'was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ'— Genesis iv, 21.

38. *gamut,* the scale, from Gamma-ut, the ancient name of the first note.

39. *singly unimpressible to,* alone incapable of receiving impressions from.

41. *stroke,* effect.

46. *cried-up,* extravagantly praised.

51. *midsummer madness.* Olivia, in *Twelfth Night* III, iv, 61: 'Why, this is very midsummer madness.' The midsummer moon was believed a cause of insanity.

56. *con,* learn by heart.

b. 1. *thrid,* thread, follow all the windings of.

2. *hieroglyphics,* the sacred picture-writings of the ancient Egyptians.

8. *follow,* with the mind, in the attempt to connect what went before with what comes after.

13. *the Enraged Musician,* a picture by Hogarth of a musician almost driven mad by street noises.

15. *Oratorio,* a sacred musical performance without scenery or special dress.

18. *pit,* the part of the theatre on the ground floor, a little removed from the stage, chiefly frequented by devoted theatre-goers who cannot afford to pay for dearer seats.

19. *Laughing Audience,* a wonderful picture by Hogarth representing varieties of mirth as seen on different human faces at a play. There is a good description of it in Dowden, *Shakspere's Mind and Art,* pp. 338–9.

30. *Party in a parlor,* etc. Quoted from the first edition of Wordsworth's *Peter Bell.* The stanza was omitted from subsequent editions, but in the meantime Shelley had taken it for the motto of his burlesque *Peter Bell the Third.*

33. *concertos,* elaborate pieces of music for one or more instruments, accompanied by an orchestra.

46. *all stops,* all punctuation marks, no words.

50. *mime,* a mimic or actor of farces. Latin *mimus.*

574. *a.* 1. *book in Patmos.* See Revelation x, 10.

3. *Burton. Anatomy of Melancholy* I, ii, 2, 6.

6. *melancholy given,* given or inclined to melancholy.

10. *amabilis insania,* delightful ecstasy. Horace, *Odes* III, iv, 5.

11. *mentis gratissimus error,* a most welcome deception of the mind, a pleasing hallucination. Horace, *Epistles* II, ii, 140.

17. *toys,* trifles, innocent amusements.

26. *habitated,* habituated, accustomed.

30. *subrusticus pudor,* awkward bashfulness. Cicero, *Epistolae ad Familiares* V, xii, first sentence.

44. *Nov——,* Vincent Novello, a well-known organist and composer.

53. *abbey,* Westminster.

b. 3. *dove's wings.* Psalm lv, 6: 'Oh that I had wings like a dove!' Barron Field says that Lamb was especially fond of the setting of these words by Kent, the English composer of the previous century. Mendelssohn's anthem, 'O for the wings of a dove,' was not yet composed.

6. *cleanse his mind.* Psalm cxix, 9: 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?' Anthems to these words were written by the English composers Cook and Boyce.

10. *rapt above earth,* etc. Walton's *Complete Angler* I, iv. See p. 212.

17. *'earthly' . . . 'heavenly.'* See 1 Corinthians xv, 48–9.

21. *German ocean,* of music by German composers.

23. *Arion* (long i), a musician of Lesbos, who, according to the Greek legend, when threatened with death by pirates, obtained permission to play one last tune. This attracted a shoal of dolphins, and upon the back of one of these he escaped to land.

24. *Tritons,* sea gods, half men, half fishes. Modern opinion would not agree with Lamb in making Bach and Beethoven subordinate to Haydn and Mozart.

28. *at my wit's end.* See Psalm cvii, 26–7.

31. *dazzle,* gleam confusedly. This is a curious use of the word, which is a diminutive of 'daze,' and means to make or become confused. *his,* Novello's.

33. *tiara,* an elaborate head-dress; originally Persian, now used with special reference to the triple crown worn by the Pope on ceremonial occasions.

34. *naked,* unadorned, frank.

38. *malleus hereticorum,* the heretics' hammer, the title of an attack upon Luther and other early Protestants.

39. *heresiarch,* chief of heretics.

41. *Marcion, Ebion, Cerinthus,* heretics of the first century, each of whom had a view inconsistent with the opinions of the other two.

42. *Gog and Magog.* See Revelation xx, 8, where they stand for all unbelievers. *what not,* anything and everything.

44. *dissipates the figment,* dispels the vision.

45. *Lutheran,* Protestant. Ben Jonson has a jesting reference to 'Luther's beer' (*Epigram* 101). Ollier in his reminiscences of Lamb says: 'Once at a musical party at Leigh Hunt's, being oppressed with what to him was nothing better than a prolonged noise . . . he said—"If one only had a pot of porter, one might get through this." It was procured for him, and he weathered the Mozartian storm.'

47. *rationalities of a purer faith,* reasonable views of Protestantism.

A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG

'The idea of the discovery of roasting pigs I borrowed from my friend Manning,' Lamb says in a letter written six months later. Manning had been in China for some years, and this fact may have suggested to Lamb his fantastic setting of the story, which in its bald outlines is a commonplace of literature going back to the third century. With the exception of the name of the Chinese philosopher Confucius (sixth century B. C.), the details are, of course, Lamb's own invention.

575. *a.* 11. *broiling,* exposing to a fierce heat; roasting, to a moderate one.

12. *the elder brother,* of earlier date.

16. *mast, beech nuts,* used to feed pigs.

18. *lubberly,* awkward.

20. *younker,* a Shaksperean word conveying the idea of youth associated with either gaiety or greenness.

25. *antediluvian,* before the flood.

28. *new-farrowed,* new-born.

35. *tenement,* habitation.

50. *firebrand,* used in the double sense of 'incendiary' and 'mischievous rogue.'

52. *premonitory moistening.* He was forewarned of the delicacies in store for him by his mouth watering.

54. *nether,* lower.

b. 1. *booby,* stupid.

6. *crackling,* the crisp **skin of roast pork.**

19. *retributory,* **avenging, punishing.**

25. *lower regions,* **stomach.**

27. *remote quarters,* his **shoulders,** on which the blows were raining.

31. *sensible,* conscious, aware.

36. *me,* the indirect object of advantage or disadvantage, often used in Shakspere. See *Taming of the Shrew,* beginning of I, ii: 'Knock me at this gate.'

42. *eats,* quasi-passive. Goldsmith, *Vicar of Wakefield:* 'If the cakes at tea eat short and crisp.' Used in the same sense by Shakspere.

50. *the lesser half,* keeping the larger share for himself.

54. *cramming,* stuffing the pig into his mouth.

55. *would choke,* wished to choke himself.

576. *a.* 13. *litter,* of nine pigs.

26. *farrowed,* brought forth young.

34. *assize town,* in England a county town to which the judges come to hold the assizes. Used here to give a burlesque effect of historic detail. So with the whole circumstances of the trial, which are distinctively modern and English.

46. *charge,* direction as to the law of the case given by an English judge.

49. *box,* the shut-in benches where the jury sit during an English trial. After hearing the evidence, they are conducted to a private room for consultation, unless they are ready to give a unanimous verdict offhand, as Lamb imagines to have been the case in this instance. The taste of the burnt pig had such an effect upon their minds that they at once agreed upon a verdict in direct contradiction to the judge's charge and the evidence.

54. *winked at,* shut his eyes to. This meaning is common in the Bible and Shakspere.

b. 3. *took wing,* was noised abroad.

15. *Locke,* the great English philosopher (1632–1704).

23. *dynasty,* succession of sovereigns of the same family. Lamb is still writing in the mock-historic style.

32. *culinary,* connected with cooking. Latin, *culina,* a kitchen.

36. *mundus edibilis,* world of eatables.

37. *princeps obsoniorum,* chief of dainties.

39. *between pig and pork,* too old to roast and too young to salt.

40. *hobbydehoy* (or hobbledehoy), a clumsy youth, 'neither a man nor a boy.'

41. *suckling,* babe at the breast. *moon,* month. Month means the period of time measured by the moon. *guiltless . . . of,* unpolluted by.

43. *amor immunditiae,* love of filth. The allusion is to the doctrine of original sin, the fall of Adam which involved all his offspring.

45. *broken,* commonly used only of the passage of a boy's voice to the deeper tones of manhood.

48. *praeludium,* prelude, music played by way of introduction.

51. *exterior tegument,* outer skin. The longer words are used in mock seriousness for comic effect.

54. *tawny,* yellowish-brown.

577. *a.* 2. *olcaginous,* oily.

7. *quintessence,* essence five times distilled.

10. *manna,* the food sent from heaven to the Israelites in the wilderness. See Exodus xvi, 14, 15.

10. *if it must be so,* if we must use terms so gross.

13. *ambrosian,* heavenly, like ambrosia, the food of the Greek gods.

15. *doing,* being cooked.

17. *passive,* submissive.

18. *equably,* smoothly, evenly, with mind undisturbed.

20. *sensibility,* sensitiveness.

22. *radiant jellies — shooting stars.* There is an ancient superstition that shooting stars leave jellies where they fall. The prosaic fact is, of course, that the young pig's eyes drop out because of the heat to which they are exposed.

30. *conversation,* manner of life, as in 2 Peter ii, 7, 'the filthy conversation of the wicked.'

34. *Ere sin could blight,* etc. This couplet is quoted, with exquisite humor, from Coleridge's *Epitaph on a Young Infant,* published in 1796 in a little volume of poems to which Lamb himself contributed.

42. *epicure,* one devoted to the pleasures of the table. The modern use of the word is a slander on the philosopher Epicurus, who was devoted to the pleasures of the intellect. *for such a tomb might be content to die,* probably a reminiscence of the last line of Milton's verses on Shakspere, 'that kings for such a tomb would wish to die.' See p. 236.

44. *sapors,* tastes, flavors.

50. *excoriateth,* takes the skin off — an exaggeration of the keenness of the flavour.

54. *stoppeth at the palate,* satisfies the taste, not the stomach.

b. 6. *censorious,* inclined to find fault without sufficient cause.

7. *batten,* fatten.

14–15. *helpeth . . . all around,* may be served and do good to everybody.

15. *is the least envious,* excites the least envy, because all parts are equally good.

17. *neighbors' fare,* food promoting neighborly or friendly feeling.

18. *I am one of those,* etc. This paragraph and the next are merely the elaboration of a letter Lamb wrote to Coleridge on March 9, 1822 — six months before the essay was published. The story of the old gray impostor and some other hints are to be found in the letter, which was evidently the foundation of the essay, the main addition being the fable of the

origin of the art of roasting, suggested by Manning.

24. *proper,* peculiar to himself. Latin, *proprius,* one's own.

26. *Absents,* those absent. The odd form adds force to the pun.

27. *'tame villatic fowl,'* quoted from Milton, *Samson Agonistes. villatic,* of the village.

28. *brawn,* boar's flesh pickled or potted.

33. *'give everything.' Lear* II, iv, 253: 'I gave you all.'

36. *extra-domiciliate,* a word of Lamb's own invention, from the Latin, *extra,* outside, and *domicilium,* a dwelling-house.

37. *slightingly,* without due appreciation.

39. *predestined,* decreed beforehand by fate.

41. *insensibility,* lack of feeling.

43. *aunt,* Sarah Lamb, Charles's Aunt Hetty, described by him more fully in the Elia essay, *My Relations.* In a letter to Coleridge in 1797 Lamb describes her as 'the kindest, goodest creature to me when I was at school; who used to toddle there to bring me good things, when I, school-boy like, only despised her for it, and used to be ashamed to see her come and sit herself down on the old coal-hole steps as you went into the old grammar-school, and open her apron, and bring out her bason, with some nice thing she had caused to be saved for me.'

52. *a counterfeit,* an impostor.

55. *the very coxcombry of charity,* the height of conceit disguising itself as charity.

578. *a. 23. impertinent,* irrelevant, inappropriate.

29. *nice,* discriminating.

33. *obsolete,* gone out of use. *The age of discipline,* of the use of the rod. The clause echoes a famous phrase of Burke's, 'the age of chivalry is gone.'

b. 2. intenerating and dulcifying, making tender and sweet.

5. *refining a violet.* See *King John* IV, ii, 11.

9. *gusto,* relish, flavor.

12. *St. Omer's,* a Jesuit college in France. Lamb was never there. Canon Ainger remarks upon this as an instance of Lamb's 'audacious indifference to fact.' The phrase on the preceding page 'over London Bridge' has also been regarded as a wilful mystification; but this is at least doubtful. Lamb had certainly no hesitation in adding fictitious details according to his fancy.

16. *per flagellationem extremam,* by whipping to death.

21. *I forget the decision.* This is the final touch of affected seriousness, the whole incident being, of course, a playful invention.

28. *barbecue,* to roast whole after splitting and stuffing. The derivation *'barbe à queue'* sometimes given is fanciful and erroneous. It comes from an Indian word, meaning a wooden frame for smoking or roasting meat. *to your palate,* with stuffing to your taste.

29. *shalots,* strong onions.

30. *rank,* strong-smelling.

31. *guilty,* harmful, poisonous, a translation of Horace's phrase (*Epodes* III, 3) *cicutis allium nocentius.*

32. *stronger,* in scent and flavor.

SCOTT: MARMION

580. 16. *Tantallon's towers.* Tantallon Castle on the coast of Haddingtonshire, Scotland.

82. *Save Gawain.* Gawain Douglas (c. 1474–1522), poet, scholar, and translator of Virgil's *Æneid.*

107. *Old Bell-the-Cat.* A phrase applied to persons of acknowledged intrepidity. From the fable of the mice and the cat.

581. 194. *The Till by Twisel Bridge.* On the evening previous to the memorable battle of Flodden, Surrey's headquarters were at Barmorewood, and King James held an inaccessible position on the ridge of Flodden-hill, one of the last and lowest eminences detached from the ridge of Cheviot. The Till, a deep and slow river, winded between the armies. On the morning of the 9th September, 1513, Surrey marched in a northwesterly direction, and crossed the Till, with his van and artillery, at Twisel-bridge, nigh where that river joins the Tweed, his rearguard column passing about a mile higher, by a ford. This movement had the double effect of placing his army between King James and his supplies from Scotland and of striking the Scottish monarch with surprise, as he seems to have relied on the depth of the river in his front. But as the passage, both over the bridge and through the ford, was difficult and slow, it seems possible that the English might have been attacked to great advantage, while struggling with these natural obstacles. (Scott.)

583. 363. Gilded spurs. The rewards of victory.

BYRON: SONNET ON CHILLON

587. 13. *Bonnivard.* Francois de Bonnivard (1496–1570) was held for six years as a political prisoner in the dungeon of the Castle of Chillon, near Geneva. Byron's well-known tale, *The Prisoner of Chillon,* presents an imaginary history of his confinement.

CHILDE HAROLD, CANTO III

40. *Morat.* The Swiss gained a decisive victory at the village of Morat in 1476.

43. *Burgundy.* Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy.

45. *the Stygian coast,* etc. An allusion to the Greek superstition that the shades of unburied men could not pass the river Styx which bounded Hades.

47. *Waterloo.* The Battle of Waterloo which ended the military career of Napoleon was fought June 18, 1815. It is described in an earlier section of this canto.

Cannæ. A battle in which Hannibal defeated the Roman army, 216 B. C.

48. *Marathon.* The Greeks defeated the Persians on the plains of Marathon, 490 B. C.

55. *Draconic.* Because of its free use of the death penalty, the code of Draco, an Athenian lawgiver of the seventh century, is proverbially said to have been written in blood.

64. *Adventicum.* The Roman name for Avenche, the ancient capital of Helvetia, or Switzerland.

66. *Julia.* This passage is based upon the epitaph of Julia Alpinula, 'Deae Aventiae Sacerdos [Priestess of the goddess Aventia],' now known to be a modern forgery.

588. 81. *like yonder Alpine snow.* Byron records that Mont Blanc was visible in the distance.

83. *Lake Leman.* Lake Geneva, the largest lake in Switzerland.

589. 164. *Rousseau.* Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), a Swiss-French philosopher of brilliant though morbid originality whose writings are held to have been a strong influence in precipitating the French Revolution.

182. *Julie.* The heroine of Rousseau's *New Héloïse* (1761).

194. *the kind.* Civilized man.

201. *Pythian's mystic cave.* The prophetess of the Delphic oracle was called 'The Pythia'; while the god she served was known as the Pythian Apollo.

590. 248. *Jura.* A mountain chain in France and Switzerland, visible from Geneva.

287. *Cytherea's zone.* The zone or girdle of the Cytherean Aphrodite, or Venus.

592. 362. *Clarens.* A village on Lake Leman celebrated in Rousseau's *New Héloïse* and in his *Confessions.*

410. *Love his Psyche's zone,* etc. An allusion to the legend of Cupid and Psyche.

421. *Titan-like.* The Titans piled the hills on each other, attempting to ascend the sky, in their war with Zeus.

425. *The one.* Voltaire.

593. 430. *Proteus.* The son of Oceanus who could assume any shape at will.

434. *The other.* Gibbon. See p. 453.

CHILDE HAROLD, CANTO IV

10. *Niobe.* According to the Greek myth Niobe brought upon her children the wrath of Artemis and Apollo, by boasting over their mother Leto who had only those two. The modern currency of the legend is largely due to a remarkable group of antique statues preserved in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence.

14. *The Scipio's tomb.* A group of tombs on the Appian Way is called 'The tombs of the Scipios.' The most famous Roman generals of this name flourished at the beginning of the second century B. C.

594. 39. *when Brutus,* etc. An allusion to the assassination of Julius Cæsar.

41. *Tully's voice.* The oratory of Cicero.

42. *Livy's pictured page.* Titus Livius (B. C. 59–17 A. D.). The greatest Roman historian.

47. *Sylla.* Lucius Cornelius Sulla (c. 138–78 B. C.). Famous for his wholesale proscription of Roman citizens.

88. *Nemesis.* The Greek personification of fortune and hence retribution.

89. *Pompey.* Cneus Pompeius Magnus (106–48 B. C.). The passage is evidently influenced by Shakspere's description in *Julius Cæsar.* See also, 267. 32, note.

92. *She-wolf.* Allusion to a bronze group which is supposed to represent Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, suckled by a wolf.

595. 107. *Save one vain man.* Napoleon, at the time this was written, a prisoner on the island of St. Helena.

116. *Alcides with the distaff.* Hercules, in expiation of the murder of Iphitus, sold himself for three years to Omphale, queen of Lydia. During this time according to some poets he sat among women and spun wool.

135. *Renew thy rainbow, God!* Compare Gen. ix, 13–17.

166. *Sprung forth a Pallas.* According to the Greek myth, the goddess of wisdom sprang, full-armed, from the brain of Jove.

596. 173. *Saturnalia.* A Roman feast in honor of Saturn in which great license was customary.

211. *Cornelia's,* etc. Celebrated Roman matron, daughter of Scipio Africanus the Elder.

212. *Egypt's graceful queen.* Cleopatra.

597. 252. *There woos no home.* Allusion to his separation from his wife and exile from England.

258. *the Palatine.* One of the 'seven hills' of Rome. It is adjacent to the site of the Forum, and was a favorite place of residence with the Roman emperors.

268. *All that learning,* etc. There have been great additions to the knowledge of Roman antiquities since Byron's day.

294. *Titus or Trajan's.* It is now believed to have been erected by Trajan, 113 A. D.

304. *A mere Alexander.* A mere military conqueror.

598. 337. *Ruins of years, though few.* Byron was thirty.

347. *Orestes,* the son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra and brother of Electra. After the return of Agamemnon from the Trojan Wars he was murdered by Clytemnestra and her paramour, Aegisthus. They were in turn slain by Orestes and he tormented by the Furies for the killing of his mother. The *Agamemnon* and *The Furies* of Aeschylus, the *Electra* and the *Orestes* of Euripides, and the *Electra* of Sophocles, are based upon this legend.

353. *For my ancestral faults.* The parallel with Orestes is here continued.

384. *Janus.* The Roman guardian of doors and gateways was represented with two faces. Compare our epithet, 'two-faced.'

599. 415. *the Gladiator.* The statue in the Museum of the Capitol upon which this passage is based is now usually called 'The Dying Gaul,' not as formerly, 'The Dying Gladiator,' and is believed to represent a warrior wounded in battle.

429. *their Dacian mother.* The region north of the Lower Danube was conquered by Trajan and made into the Roman province of Dacia, 101 B. C. Ten thousand captives were carried to Rome and exhibited in combats for the amusement of the Roman populace.

432. *Arise! ye Goths,* etc. Alludes to the taking of Rome by the Barbarians, in 410 A. D.

456. *the bald first Cæsar's head.* 'Suetonius informs us that Julius Cæsar was particularly gratified by that decree of the senate which enabled him to wear a wreath of laurel on all occasions. He was anxious, not to show that he was the conqueror of

the world, but to hide that he was bald.' (Byron.) This stroke of bold bathos is very characteristic of Byron and anticipates his manner in *Don Juan*.

600. 463. *Thus spake the pilgrims.* Byron refers in his note on this passage to Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*. His familiarity with Gibbon is conspicuous throughout this canto.

THE VISION OF JUDGMENT

This poem is an indignant parody upon a poem of the same title in which Robert Southey, poet laureate, had celebrated the passing of George III. Byron's anger was augmented by the fact that Southey had arraigned him in his preface as the chief of a 'Satanic School' of English poetry. Southey had been a strong radical in his earlier years, but had now become a complacent servant of the government. The situation is tersely stated in a sentence of Byron's *Preface:* 'These apostate Jacobins furnish rich rejoinders.'

36. *A German will.* Probably this means only obscure, difficult. Byron's jibes at Germans were frequent.

37. *his son,* George IV.

602. 160. *Captain Parry's crew.* A narrative of Parry's arctic expedition had appeared in 1821.

168. *Johanna Southcote.* A fanatical Englishwoman of low birth who created a popular religious sensation at the beginning of the century. Died 1814.

200. *champ clos,* closed field, lists.

604. 281. *He came to his scepter young; he leaves it old.* George III reigned from 1760 to 1820.

308. *Apicius' board.* Marcus Gabius Apicius, the most celebrated Roman epicure, flourished in the time of Augustus and Tiberius.

327. *The foe to Catholic participation.* The political disability of Catholics was not removed until 1829.

355. *Guelph.* The House of Hanover was descended from Guelph stock. The allusion seems inappropriate here, inasmuch as the Guelphs were friends of the Papacy.

357. *Cerberus.* The watchdog at the entrance of the infernal regions. See **237.** 2, note.

359. *Bedlam.* Bethlehem hospital for the insane, in London; hence, proverbially, the madhouse.

DON JUAN, CANTO III

605. 2. *Sappho.* Greek poetess (c. 600 B. C.).

4. *Delos.* An island of the Cyclades, Apollo's birthplace, hence Apollo.

4. *Phoebus.* One of the epithets of Apollo, god of poetry.

7. *Scian.* The island of Scio was a home of epic poetry and laid claim to Homer.

the Teian muse. Anacreon. See below, 63–64.

13. *Marathon.* See **587.** 48, note.

20. *Salamis.* An island off Attica, near which the Greeks won their decisive naval victory over the fleet of Xerxes, 480 B. C.

55. *Pyrrhic dance.* An ancient martial dance in quick time.

63–64. *Anacreon's song . . . Polycrates.* From his birthplace, Teos in Asia Minor, Anacreon went to the court of the tyrant, Polycrates (d. 522 B. C.), in the island of Samos. His poetry celebrates the pleasures of love and wine.

67–69. *Chersonese . . . Miltiades.* Miltiades whom Peisistratus had appointed master of the Chersonesus in Crete was the leader to whom the Greeks owed much of their success in Marathon.

74. *Suli's rock.* Suli, a mountain district in Albania, European Turkey, was the home of a warlike race, Suliotes. They played an important part in the Greek rebellion with which Byron was later associated.

Parga's shore. Parga was an Albanian sea-port.

76. *Doric.* One of the divisions of the Greek race. Here, Spartan.

78. *Heracleidan blood.* Race of Hercules, Spartans.

79. *Franks.* Western Europeans generally.

606. 91. *Sunium's marbled steep.* Cape Colonna with its ruins of a temple of Athene.

99. *Orpheus.* The earliest poet in Greek legend. See **238.** 145, note.

127. *the great Marlborough's skill.* He won the battle of Blenheim, 1704.

128. *Life by Archdeacon Coxe.* Like many of Byron's allusions, this one is strictly 'up-to-date.' The Memoirs of Marlborough appeared in 1718–19.

133. *his life . . . Johnson's way,* etc. Dr. Johnson's life of Milton in his *Lives of the English Poets* (1779–80).

138. *Bacon's bribes.* See p. 187.

139. *Titus' Youth.* The reign of Titus Vespasianus (A. D. 79–81) was popular; but his youth, though brilliant, had been marked by luxury and indiscretion.

Cæsar's earliest acts. The youth of Julius Cæsar is said to have been voluptuous.

140. *Doctor Currie.* James Currie (1756–1805), a Scottish physician, edited the first collective edition of Burns's works (1800).

146. *Pantisocracy.* See the sketch of Coleridge, p. 542.

148. *peddler poems.* A hit at the humbleness of Wordsworth's characters.

152. *Milliners of Bath.* The implication is false. The Misses Fricker were respectable young women of Bristol, although they had lived for a time at Bath.

154. *Botany Bay.* An inlet near Sydney, Australia, the seat of a colony of transported criminals.

607. 198. *Boccaccio's lore.* The reference is to the eighth tale of the fifth day of the *Decameron*.

199. *Dryden's lay.* Dryden's *Theodore and Honoria,* is an adaptation of the above-mentioned tale by Boccaccio.

205. *Onesti's line.* Boccaccio's Nastagio degli Onesti is Dryden's Theodore.

608. 238. *Cantabs.* Those associated with the University of Cambridge.

DON JUAN, CANTO IV

21. *'falls into the yellow leaf.'* From *Macbeth* V, 3, 23.

55. *Apollo plucks me by the ear.* Compare *Lycidas,* 'and touched my trembling ears,' **240.** 77.

611. 417. *Cognac.* A French brandy.

418. *Naïad.* A water nymph.

418. *Phlegethontic rill.* Playful allusion to Phlegethon, the river of fire in Hades.

431. *Fez.* A province of Morocco.

612. 456. *the Simoom.* A hot wind of the desert much dreaded in the Mediterranean countries.

484. *the fair Venus.* The statue described by Byron in *Childe Harold,* Canto IV, St. xlix, is the Venus de Medici.

485. *Laocoon's . . . throes.* An antique group in the Vatican, Rome. It is described by Byron, *Childe Harold,* Canto IV, St. clx.

486. *ever-dying Gladiator's air.* See 599. 415, and note.

SHELLEY: PROMETHEUS UNBOUND, ACT IV

The conception of *Prometheus Unbound* was suggested to Shelley by the *Prometheus Bound* of Æschylus. The Titan, Prometheus, having offended Zeus by his gift to man of fire and the arts, is bound to a rocky mountain-side and subjected to appalling tortures. Nothing can subdue his will and he disappears at the end in a tremendous storm. Shelley represents Prometheus, after the lapse of ages, adding love to power and endurance; whereupon he is released by Hercules and united with Asia, who typifies the generative principle in nature. Act IV is purely lyrical and portrays the elements rejoicing in the overthrow of Jupiter, the evil potency which has hitherto ruled the universe and the bulk of humanity.

619. 197. *Æolian,* wind-born. From Æolus, god of winds.

620. 291. *valueless,* priceless, beyond valuation.

621. 348. *Sceptered curse.* Jupiter.

622. 427. *Dædal,* cunningly contriving or creative.

623. 484. *Mænad,* Bacchante.

485. *Agave,* the daughter of Cadmus.

486. *Cadmeian,* Theban; from Cadmus, the mythical founder of Thebes. A world of oriental mystery envelops the Cadmeian legend.

522. *A mighty Power.* Demogorgon, who seems to represent, in Shelley's mythology, the ultimate force which presides over the destinies of the universe.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

625. 21. *Mænad.* See 623. 484, note.

32. *pumice,* a light, porous, volcanic substance.

32. *Baiæ's bay.* Modern Baja, in Campania, Italy. Baiæ was a favorite resort of the luxurious in the days of the Early Empire.

THE INDIAN SERENADE

626. 11. *Champak.* An Indian tree, planted about temples. The perfume of its flowers is often celebrated in Hindu poetry.

THE CLOUD

627. 81. *cenotaph.* An honorary tomb to a person whose remains are lost, or who is buried elsewhere.

ADONAIS

629. This elegy was written in memory of John Keats, for whom, see p. 639.

12. *Urania.* The celestial Muse. She is the Heavenly Muse of Milton's *Paradise Lost.* Shelley's conception has been influenced by that of Milton.

630. 55. *that high Capital.* Rome.

631. 127–35. *Lost Echo,* etc. Narcissus, insensible to love, was caused to fall in love with his own image and pined away until he was turned into a flower. The nymph Echo, disappointed of his love, died from grief.

140. *to Phœbus was not Hyacinth.* Apollo fell in love with a beautiful youth, Hyacinthus, who died and was turned into a flower. See 241. 106, note.

141. *Narcissus.* See above, 127–35, note.

160. *brere,* brier.

632. 238. *the unpastured dragon.* The selfish and greedy world.

244. *The herded wolves.* The banded critics who execute the will of successful politicians.

250. *The Pythian of the age.* Lord Byron in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers,* by allusion to the Pythian Apollo, slayer of the Python.

633. 264. *The Pilgrim of Eternity.* The author of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,* Byron.

268. *Ierne,* Ireland. Thomas Moore is meant.

271. *Midst others of less note,* etc. Shelley himself.

276. *Actæon-like.* According to a Greek myth the hunter Actæon, having seen Diana bathing, was changed into a stag and destroyed by his own hounds.

280. *pardlike,* leopardlike.

307–15. *What softer voice,* etc. Keats's nearest friend among literary men, Leigh Hunt.

634. 325. *Live thou, whose infamy,* etc. The unknown critic who had assailed Keats in the *Quarterly Review.*

635. 399. *Chatterton.* See p. 377.

401. *Sidney.* Sir Philip Sidney (1554–86). See p. 81.

404. *Lucan.* Marcus Annæus Lucanus (39–65 A. D.), Roman poet. He committed suicide to prevent his execution for joining a conspiracy against Nero.

439. *A slope of green access.* The protestant burial ground at Rome, where Keats was buried, and where Shelley's ashes were placed a few months after these lines were written.

FINAL CHORUS FROM HELLAS

636. The conception of this poem and many of the details are adapted from Virgil's fourth *Eclogue.*

9. *Peneus.* The principal river in Thessaly.

11. *Tempes.* The vale of Tempe, in Thessaly, between Olympus and Ossa and traversed by the river Peneus, is celebrated for its beauty.

12. *Cyclads.* The islands known as the Cyclades are in the Ægean Sea, about Delos. Among those frequently mentioned in Greek history are Ceos, Naxos, and Paros.

13. *Argo.* The ship in which Jason and the Argonauts sought the golden fleece.

15. *Orpheus.* See 238. 145, note.

18. *Calypso.* At the opening of the *Odyssey,* Ulysses is being detained by the nymph Calypso

upon her island, where he has been for seven years.

21. *Laian.* As of Laius, king of Thebes and father to Œdipus, whose family was pursued by strange misfortunes.

23. *A subtler Sphinx,* etc. Œdipus solved the riddle of the Sphinx; whereupon she slew herself.

637. 31. *Saturn and Love.* The age of gold, supposed to have existed before Saturn was overthrown by Jupiter, was thought of as one of perfect happiness and love.

WITH A GUITAR, TO JANE

1. *Ariel to Miranda.* The reference is, of course, to the characters in Shakspere's *Tempest.* Ariel is Shelley, and Miranda is Mrs. Williams.

10. *Prince Ferdinand.* Edward Williams, a young English officer with whom Shelley was intimate towards the end of his life. He and Shelley were drowned together. See Life, p. 614.

KEATS: KEEN, FITFUL GUSTS ARE WHISPERING HERE AND THERE

639. 10. *a little cottage.* Leigh Hunt's home at Hampstead Heath. Hunt was deeply interested in Italian poetry.

12. *gentle Lycid drowned.* For Milton's Lycidas, see p. 240.

13. *Laura.* The lady to whom Petrarch addressed his sonnets. According to one theory she was the wife of Hugues de Sade and mother of eleven children.

14. *Petrarch gloriously crowned.* Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374). He was crowned poet laureate, at Rome, in 1341.

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

4. *Apollo,* As patron of poetry.

8. *Chapman.* George Chapman published his translation of Homer in instalments between 1598 and 1616. It is still prized as one of the greatest of English poetical translations.

11. *stout Cortez.* Not Cortez, but Balboa actually discovered the Pacific Ocean.

14. *Darien.* The mountain from which Balboa first sighted the Pacific was nearly a month's journey from his base at Darien.

ENDYMION, BOOK I

640. 35. *the story of Endymion.* The most famous English treatment of the legend before Keats was that of John Lyly in his drama, *Endymion* (1579).

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

1. *St. Agnes' Eve,* January 20, in popular opinion, apt to be the coldest night of the year. St. Agnes suffered martyrdom under Diocletian. The chief superstitions connected with the Eve of St. Agnes are given in the course of the poem, especially ll. 47–55.

643. 172. *Since Merlin paid his Demon.* According to the legend with which Keats was familiar, Merlin had been begotten by demons. He was beguiled by an enchantress who employed one of his own spells to imprison him forever in a tree in the forest of Broceliande. Immediately afterward, a terrific tempest swept the forest. The legend forms the basis of Tennyson's *Merlin and Vivien* in *The Idylls of the King.*

643. 242. *missal where swart Paynims pray.* A prayer-book bearing upon its margin pictures of converted heathen in the act of prayer.

644. 270. *Fez.* See **611.** 431, note.

271. *Samarcand.* A city in Turkestan, more important in the middle ages than now. It was the capital of the conqueror Tamerlane.

271. *cedared Lebanon.* A mountain range in Syria, famed from remote antiquity for its cedars.

293. *In Provence called, 'La belle dame sans mercy.'* This is the title of a poem by Alain Chartier, a translation of which Keats had seen in a volume of Chaucer. The ascription of it to Provence is fanciful. The same words suggested to Keats the poem of this title, p. 654.

645. 350. *Rhenish,* wine from the vineyards of the Rhine.

350. *mead,* a liquor made by fermenting honey, much prized by the ancient Teutons.

ROBIN HOOD

For the ballads of Robin Hood, see above. pp. 38–42.

LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN

646. 4. *the Mermaid Tavern.* A favorite resort of Elizabethan dramatists, Shakspere, Ben Jonson, Beaumont, etc.

6. *Canary wine.* Wine made in the Canary islands. It was the 'sack' of Shakspere and his contemporaries.

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

647. 7. *Tempe.* See **636.** 11, note.

7. *Arcady.* Arcadia, celebrated in pastoral poetry as the house of a carefree shepherd life.

41. *brede,* embroidery. Strictly, braid.

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

4. *Lethe-wards.* Towards the river of oblivion.

7. *Dryad,* a tree nymph.

13. *Flora,* goddess of the flowers and the spring.

14. *Provencal song.* Medieval lyric began in Provence. See **644.** 293, and note.

16. *Hippocrene,* the Muses' fountain on Mount Helicon.

648. 32. *Bacchus and his pards.* The leopard or, more strictly, the panther, was associated with the god of wine. He was sometimes represented in a chariot drawn by leopards.

37. *Fays,* fairies.

66. *Ruth.* See Ruth ii.

ODE ON MELANCHOLY

1. *Lethe.* The river of oblivion, in Hades.

4. *Proserpine.* Queen of the infernal regions.

7. *Psyche,* the soul. Her symbol was the butterfly.

HYPERION

Of the design of this poem Keats's friend, Woodhouse, wrote in his annotated copy: 'The poem, if completed, would have treated of the dethrone-

ment of Hyperion, the former god of the sun, by Apollo — and incidentally of those of Oceanus by Neptune, of Saturn by Jupiter, etc., and of the war of the Giants for Saturn's reëstablishment — with other events, of which we have but very dark hints in the mythological poets of Greece and Rome.'

650. 4. *Saturn,* an Italic deity, supposed to have ruled in the golden age; he was identified with the Greek Cronus, father and predecessor of Zeus. See, also, 250. 509, note.

23. *there came one.* Thea, sister of Hyperion, one of the female Titans.

30. *Ixion's wheel.* See 361. 133, note.

31. *Memphian sphinx.* A purely hypothetical sphinx. Memphis was an early capital of Egypt.

651. 147. *The rebel three.* Jupiter, Neptune, and Apollo.

652. 166. *Blazing Hyperion.* Hyperion was the pre-Olympian god of the sun. He was supplanted by Apollo.

181. *Aurorian.* Of Aurora, goddess of the dawn.

653. 246. *Tellus,* the earth goddess.

274. *broad-belting colure.* The colures are the two great circles which belt the celestial sphere, intersecting each other at right angles at the poles of the equator.

307. *Cœlus,* god of the firmament.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

See 644. 293, note.

ON SEEING THE ELGIN MARBLES

Between 1801 and 1803 the Earl of Elgin brought from Athens and deposited in the British Museum a superb collection of Greek sculptures. Keats derived not a little of his sympathy with Greek conceptions of beauty from the study of these antiquities.

BRIGHT STAR! WOULD I WERE STEADFAST AS THOU ART

This is believed to have been the last poem written by Keats. It was composed on shipboard just before his departure for Italy and written across a blank page of Shakspere's poems.

4. *ermite,* hermit.

NINETEENTH CENTURY LYRICS

ROBERT SOUTHEY: THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM

657. 56. *Prince Eugene.* François Eugene de Savoie-Carignan (1663–1736), a distinguished Austrian general, in alliance with Marlborough defeated the French and Bavarians at Blenheim, Aug. 13, 1704.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR: ROSE AYLMER

657. The subject of this poem was a beautiful Welsh girl who had died in Italy. She was of an ancient and titled family; hence, 'the sceptred race.'

PAST RUINED ILION

1. *Ilion,* Troy.

2. *Alcestis,* the heroine of Euripides' drama of that name.

ARTEMIDORA

658. 11. *Iris stood over her dark hair.* Iris the messenger of the gods was supposed to loosen the hair of dying persons and, until she did so, their spirits were unable to depart.

DIRCE

1. *Stygian,* of the river Styx; here, destined for Hades.

3. *Charon.* The ferryman of the river Styx.

ON LUCRETIA BORGIA'S HAIR

Lucretia Borgia (1480–1519), Duchess of Ferrara, was famed for beauty, wit, and wickedness.

MEMORY AND PRIDE

3. *Ianthè,* Sophia Jane Swift, afterwards Countess de Molandé, Landor's early 'flame' and life-long friend. Many of his lyrics of gallantry were addressed to her.

TO ROBERT BROWNING

10–14. *But warmer climes,* etc. Browning had just married Elizabeth Barrett and left England for Italy.

TO AGE

3. *The Fates . . . shears.* Compare 240. 75, and note.

THOMAS CAMPBELL: YE MARINERS OF ENGLAND

659. 15. *Blake.* Robert Blake, the famous admiral of the Commonwealth, died at sea, 1757.

Nelson fell. Horatio, first Viscount Nelson, the chief naval hero of England, died at Trafalgar, October 21, 1805. He 'fell' severely wounded, at the Battle of Copenhagen, April 2, 1801.

THOMAS MOORE: THE HARP THAT ONCE THROUGH TARA'S HALLS

Tara, the ancient capital of one branch of the Irish race, is frequently named in early Irish poetry.

JOHN KEBLE: UNITED STATES

661. 1. This poem had been preceded in the *Lyra Apostolica* by John Henry Newman's similar apostrophe to England, beginning 'Tyre of the West.'

23. *Tyre,* the great trading center of ancient Phenicia, was constantly execrated by the Hebrew prophets for its worldliness and commercial prosperity. *Salem,* Jerusalem.

WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED: THE BELLE OF THE BALL-ROOM

665. 31. *Locke.* John Locke (1632–1704), author of *Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* etc.

32. *Little.* A pseudonym of Thomas Moore.

61. *Handel.* Georg Friederich Händel lived for a long time in London and died there in 1759. His compositions were popular in England.

62. *the Catalani.* Angelica Catalani, an Italian singer.

70. *Fierce odes,* etc. Probably an allusion to Coleridge's *Fire, Famine, and Slaughter.*

71. *Prince Leboo.* Jean Louis Joseph Lebeau (b. 1794) was a distinguished Belgian diplomat who carried on important negotiations in England, 1830–31.

666. 67. *the vapors,* a 'Queen Anne' term for the blues.

71. *Werther.* Goethe's sentimental novel, *The Sorrows of Werther.*

73. *The City.* The business district of London.

WILLIAM BARNES: BLACKMORE MAIDENS

The peculiarities of the spelling are intended to suggest the Dorsetshire pronunciation.

667. 4. *Clote,* waterlily.

7. *bricken tuns.* Brick-built vats.

37. *tweil,* toil.

EDWARD FITZGERALD: THE RUBAIYAT

669. 7. *the dark Ferrash,* servant, camp-follower.

11. *Sáki,* wine-bearer.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING: A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

670. 1. *Pan.* God of forests and flocks, the special deity of Arcadia. To him was imputed the invention of the shepherd's flute.

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE

This sonnet series is based upon the courtship of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett (see p. 785). When the poems were published the description 'from the Portuguese' was adopted for the sake of disguising their personal import.

I

1–2. *Theocritus had sung . . . years. Idyl* XV, 104–5.

13. *'Death'! I said.* Miss Barrett had been for years an invalid.

V

2. *As once Electra,* etc. An allusion to a passage in the *Electra* of Sophocles in which the heroine, holding as she supposes the urn containing the ashes of her brother Orestes, experiences a sudden revulsion of feeling when she finds him alive before her.

11. *those laurels,* etc. Browning's poetical fame.

XXXV

671. 1. *If I leave all,* etc. The marriage with Browning, because of the character and attitude of Miss Barrett's father, involved the severing of all home ties.

SIDNEY DOBELL: AMERICA

These sonnets are from a series published during the Crimean War, when America was supposed to be hostile to Great Britain.

677. 6. *satcheled.* Compare *As You Like It,* II, 7, 145, 'the schoolboy with his satchel,' etc.

AUSTIN DOBSON: A DEAD LETTER

679. 11. *Goldsmith's Madam Blaize.* An allusion to Goldsmith's ridiculous poem *An elegy on the Glory of her Sex, Mrs. Mary Blaize.*

14. *tea-board garden-maker.* Apparently, one designing a garden on the scale of a tea-tray.

15. *Dutch William's day.* William of Orange's time, 1688 and after.

38. *Tithonus.* See p. 778 and note.

680. 52. *Damson Jam.* Jam made of the damson, or damask plum.

62. *Padesoy,* paduasoy, a rich heavy silk from Padua.

63. *the Vapors.* See 666. 67, note.

79. *Bonzes,* images of Buddhist priests.

112. *Point and Flanders.* Lace.

JAMES THOMSON: MELENCOLIA

16. *the pure sad artist.* Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), Nuremberg, painter and engraver. The sketch here described is one of his works on copper.

74. *teen and threne.* Sorrow and lamentation.

DE QUINCEY: CONFESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH OPIUM EATER

The version of the 'Confessions' adopted in the text is that of the original issue in the *London Magazine* (1821), which has been generally preferred, both by the critics and the public, to the enlarged edition published by De Quincey in his collected works thirty-five years later. On account of his tendency to digression, De Quincey's second thoughts are sometimes less effective than his first. The additional details given in the later version have been used in the notes and are distinguished by quotation marks.

684. *a.* 1. *an affection of the stomach.* Opium is said to be a remedy for gastrodynia, or neuralgia of the stomach.

20. *My father.* Thomas Quincey, merchant, of Manchester, d. July 18, 1793.

50. *'and a ripe and good one.'* See *Henry VIII,* IV, ii, 51–2. The master in question was a Mr. Morgan, of Bath Grammar School.

55. *a blockhead.* The master of Winkfield, a small private school.

b. 1. *a respectable scholar.* Mr. Lawson, head of Manchester Grammar School.

4. —— *College,* Brasenose.

9. *Etonian* Up to 1851 the curriculum at Eton was entirely classical.

27. *Archididascalus.* Greek for head master.

685. *a.* 11. *a woman of high rank,* Lady Carbery. 'A young woman some ten years older than myself, and who was remarkable for her intellectual pretensions as she was for her beauty and her benevolence.'

15. *five guineas,* $25.

35. *of Dr. Johnson's,* at the end of the last article in his periodical, *The Idler.*

44. *I had not been happy.* The chief reasons of De Quincey's unhappiness at Manchester Grammar School were (1) the state of his health, the school hours not permitting him to take sufficient exercise;

(2) his dislike of the head master; (3) the refusal of his guardian to allow him to go to Oxford, as explained above.

b. 3. *valediction,* farewell.

21. *towers of* ——, the 'old church,' now the cathedral of the modern diocese of Manchester.

49. *'pensive citadel.'* See Wordsworth's sonnet *Nuns fret not,* 537. 3, and note.

686. *a.* 9. *eighteen years ago,* when De Quincey wrote the 'Confessions' about Christmas, 1820; really nineteen when they were published, the following September and October.

13. *lovely* ——. A portrait of an unknown lady, reputed in the school to be a copy from Vandyke (1598–1641).

22. —— *clock,* 'the old church clock.'

54–55. See *Paradise Lost* II, 306–7, p. 258.

56. *Salisbury Plain,* in Wiltshire.

b. 3. *contretemps,* mishap, unlucky accident.

25. *canorous,* resonant, ringing.

686. *b.* 27. *the Seven Sleepers,* seven Christian youths of Ephesus, who took refuge in a cave from persecution, and, according to the legend, slept there for 230 years.

32. *étourderie,* heedless, giddy behaviour.

35. *Dr.* ——. 'The head-master at that time was Mr. Charles Lawson. In former editions of this work I created him a doctor; my object being to evade too close an approach to the realities of the case, and consequently to personalities, which (though indifferent to myself) would have been in some cases displeasing to others.'

50. *'with Providence my guide.' Paradise Lost,* closing lines:

'The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.'

687. *a.* 16. *lustrum,* period of five years.

38. *νυχθήμερον,* a night and a day.

42. *That moveth.* See Wordsworth's *Resolution and Independence,* 529. 77.

44. *Now, then, I was again happy.* This was in 1816, the year of De Quincey's marriage, which induced him to suddenly cut down from 8,000 to 1,000 drops his daily allowance of opium. 'Instantaneously, and as if by magic, the cloud of profoundest melancholy which rested upon my brain, like some black vapors that I have seen roll away from the summit of a mountain, drew off in one week.' De Quincey began to take opium in 1804 as a remedy for 'excruciating rheumatic pains of the head and face'; but he did not become a regular and confirmed opium eater till 1813, when he was attacked by 'a most appalling irritation of the stomach.' De Quincey made repeated efforts to free himself from thraldom to the drug, which brought on severe depression and made him at times incapable of mental exertion, but he never entirely succeeded.

b. 3. *Kant,* Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), the founder of 'Transcendental' Philosophy.

22. *Malay.* There has been an inclination to regard this as a fictitious personage invented by De Quincey to give variety and color to his narrative; he himself protested that he had recorded the incident 'most faithfully.' He adds a note to the later edition: 'Between the sea-faring populations on the coast of Lancashire and the corresponding populations on the coast of Cumberland (such as Ravenglass, Whitehaven, Workington, Maryport, etc.) there was a slender current of interchange constantly going on, and especially in the days of press-gangs — in part by sea, but in part also by land.'

28. *a young girl.* 'This girl, Barbara Lewthwaite, was already at that time a person of some poetic distinction, being (unconsciously to herself) the chief speaker in a little pastoral poem of Wordsworth's. That she was really beautiful, and not merely so described by me for the sake of improving the picturesque effect, the reader will judge from this line in the poem, written perhaps ten years earlier, when Barbara might be six years old: —

'Twas little Barbara Lewthwaite, a child of beauty rare!'

De Quincey adds in an appendix that subsequently, when a young woman, she entered unconsciously into the composition of Wordsworth's Ode, *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood.* Wordsworth, however, writing in 1843, when Barbara Lewthwaite was still living at Ambleside, says that she was not in fact the child whom he had seen and overheard as described in *The Pet Lamb.* Within a few months after the publication of the poem, it came to Barbara's knowledge, 'and alas! I had the mortification of hearing that she was very vain of being thus distinguished: and, in after-life, she used to say that she remembered the incident and what I said to her upon the occasion.'

688. *a.* 32. *Anastasius,* a novel published in 1819, and in 1821 'both of high reputation and of great influence amongst the leading circles of society.' Its hero was a Greek who ate opium, and it included a glossary of the Oriental terms used in the story.

34. *Mithridates,* King of Pontus, was said to be able to speak the twenty two dialects of his kingdom. For this reason the German philologer Adelung gave this title to a universal dictionary of languages he published in 1806.

b. 29. *'a-muck,'* Malay *amoq,* 'rushing in a state of frenzy to the commission of indiscriminate murder.'

32. *intercalary,* interpolated, intervening. An intercalary day is one inserted to make the calendar agree with the solar year, as the 29th of February in leap year.

32. *happiness, i.e.,* opium.

689. *a.* 21. *didactically,* in the way of teaching, by direct instruction.

26. *elixir,* the philosopher's stone, which the alchemists imagined would confer perpetual youth.

30. *a cottage standing in a valley.* 'The cottage and valley concerned in this description were not imaginary: the valley was the lovely one, *in those days,* of Grasmere: and the cottage was occupied for more than twenty years by myself, as immediate

successor, in the year 1809, to Wordsworth. Looking to the limitation here laid down — viz. *in those days* — the reader will inquire in what way *Time* can have affected the beauty of Grasmere. Do the Westmoreland valleys turn grey-headed? O reader! this is a painful memento for some of us! Thirty years ago, a gang of vandals (nameless, I thank heaven, to me), for the sake of building a mail-coach road that never would be wanted, carried, at a cost of £3,000 to the defrauded parish, a horrid causeway of sheer granite masonry, for three-quarters of a mile, right through the loveliest succession of secret forest dells and shy recesses of the lake, margined by unrivalled ferns, amongst which was the *Osmunda regalis*. This sequestered angle of Grasmere is described by Wordsworth, as it unveiled itself on a September morning, in the exquisite poems on the "Naming of Places." From this also — viz. this spot of ground, and this magnificent crest (the *Osmunda*) — was suggested that unique line, the finest independent line through all the records of verse:

> Or lady of the lake,
> Sole-sitting by the shores of old romance.

Rightly, therefore, did I introduce this limitation. The Grasmere before and after this outrage were two different vales.'

689. *a.* 42. *a witty author,* Coleridge in *The Devil's Thoughts:*

> He saw a cottage with a double coach-house,
> A cottage of gentility!
> And the Devil did grin, for his darling sin
> Is pride that apes humility.

b. 21. *The Castle of Indolence,* by Thomson, Canto I, Stanza 43. See p. 373.

25. *a high latitude,* far north. Lord Dufferin's travels in Iceland are described in *Letters from High Latitudes.*

32. *'particular,'* precise, exactly. De Quincey puts the word in quotation marks because this use of it is a Northern provincialism.

34. *Mr.* ——, 'Anti-slavery Clarkson,' the author of a *History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade.*

45. *a Canadian winter.* De Quincey seems to have been in earnest in this preference. At one time he thought of retiring to the woods of Lower Canada to devote himself to philosophic studies, and he had even fixed upon the situation for a cottage and a considerable library seventeen miles below Quebec. He gives the following reasons for this choice: 'My object was simply profound solitude, such as cannot now be had in any part of Great Britain — with two accessory advantages, also peculiar to countries situated in the circumstances and under the climate of Canada: viz. the exalting presence in an under-consciousness of forests endless and silent, the everlasting sense of living amongst forms so ennobling and impressive, together with the pleasure attached to natural agencies, such as frosts, more powerfully manifested than in English latitudes, and for a much longer period. I hope there is nothing fanciful in all this. It is certain that in England and in all moderate climates, we are too slightly reminded of nature or the forces of nature. Great heats or great colds (and in Canada there are both) or great hurricanes, as in the West Indian latitudes, recall us continually to the sense of a powerful presence, investing our path on every side: whereas in England it is possible to forget that we live amongst greater agencies than those of men and human institutions.'

48. *fee-simple,* a legal phrase for absolute ownership.

51. *St. Thomas's day,* December 21.

53. *vernal,* spring.

690. *a.* 10. *bellum internecinum,* war to the death. Hanway wrote an *Essay on Tea* (1756), which Dr. Johnson reviewed and condemned, declaring himself 'a hardened and shameless tea-drinker, . . . whose kettle has scarcely time to cool.' A lively controversy resulted. See Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (Macmillan's edition — Library of English Classics), I, pp. 224–5.

27. *'a double debt to pay.'* Goldsmith's *Deserted Village,* 466. 229–30.

46. eternal *à parte ante* and *à parte post,* from everlasting to everlasting, having no beginning and no end.

53. *Aurora . . . Hebe,* beautiful Greek goddesses, the former the personification of Dawn, the latter of Youth.

54. *dear M——,* Margaret, De Quincey's wife.

b. 8. *'little golden receptacle, etc.,'* quoted from the *Anastasius* mentioned above.

16. *'stately Pantheon,'* a London theatre, so described by Wordsworth, near which was the druggist's shop from which De Quincey first obtained opium, as described in an earlier passage in the 'Confessions' not included in our extracts.

29. *my body should be had into court,* adapted from the wording of the writ of habeas corpus.

37. *the Opium-eater's exterior.* As was pointed out in the introductory biography, De Quincey's personal appearance was peculiar. Carlyle describes him as 'one of the smallest men you ever in your life beheld; but with a most gentle and sensible face, only the teeth are destroyed by opium, and the little bit of an under lip projects like a shelf.' 'Blue-eyed, blonde-haired, sparkling face,— had there not been a something, too, which said, "*Ecce,* this child has been in hell!"' Professor Masson writes: 'In addition to the general impression of his diminutiveness and fragility, one was struck with the peculiar beauty of his head and forehead, rising disproportionately high over his small, wrinkly visage and gentle, deep-set eyes.' The effect of his childish figure and odd gait was increased by his eccentricities of dress. 'His clothes had generally a look of extreme age, and also of having been made for a person somewhat larger than himself.' He was fond of list slippers for outdoor wear and sometimes forgot to put on one or both stockings.

48. *categories,* of Aristotle: 1 Substance or Being, 2 Quantity, 3 Quality, 4 Relation, 5 Place, 6 Time, etc.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY: THE ROMANCE OF HISTORY

The article of which the latter part is here printed was professedly a review in the *Edinburgh*, May, 1828, of a new book by a popular writer of that day, Henry Neele, entitled, 'The Romance of History. England'; but this served Macaulay merely as an opportunity to set forth his own ideas as to how history should be written. He had stated the same opinions before in a review of Mitford's *History of Greece*, and he re-stated them in reviews of the historical works of Hallam and Mackintosh before he was able to put them into practice in his own *History of England from the Accession of James II.* In spite of his extraordinary aptitude for the undertaking, he carried out his scheme for only fifteen years of the century and a half for which the work was planned; no one man, even in a long life, could have executed the design with such a broad canvas and in such minute detail as Macaulay attempted. Much of the higher side of life was omitted, and many of his judgments have not stood the test of subsequent investigation. The modern historian aims at far greater accuracy as well as a more profound inquiry into causes; but no one has been more successful than Macaulay in writing a historical narrative of unfailing interest to the general reader.

692. *a.* 7. *Laud,* Archbishop of Canterbury, 1633–45, and the director of Charles I's ecclesiastical policy. Curiously enough, the very faults of which Macaulay here accuses other historians have since been urged against himself, and Laud is one of the instances cited. Professor Montague says: 'Macaulay, who regarded this period of English history in a peculiarly partisan spirit, uniformly wrote of Laud's personal character with a loathing, and of his abilities with a contempt, unbecoming the gravity of a historian.'

11. *Herodotus,* 'the father of history' and the first important writer of Greek prose. Macaulay says of him earlier in this same article: 'Of the romantic historians Herodotus is the earliest and the best. His animation, his simple-hearted tenderness, his wonderful talent for description and dialogue, and the pure, sweet flow of his language, place him at the head of narrators. . . . He has written something better perhaps than the best history; but he has not written a good history; he is, from the first to the last chapter, an inventor.' Fuller knowledge has proved that Herodotus is much more accurate and trustworthy than Macaulay here makes out.

41. *Hume's History of England* was published in 1754–61 and still retained its popularity in 1825, as Macaulay admits in his essay on Milton, in which he says that Hume 'hated religion so much that he hated liberty for having been allied with religion, and has pleaded the cause of tyranny with the dexterity of an advocate, while affecting the impartiality of a judge.' This comment Professor Montague describes as 'mere childish petulance,' adding that 'Hume sympathized with the Stuarts because he was a Scotchman and distrusted popular government because he was a sceptic.' The fact is, as Professor Huxley points out in his essay on Hume, that Hume wrote history from the Tory point of view, Macaulay from that of the Whigs.

46. *obnoxious,* open, liable. *Gibbon* published his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* in 1776–88. It has stood the test of time much better than Macaulay's own work and has still a very high reputation for impartiality and accuracy.

49. *Mitford,* who died the year before this criticism appeared, published his *History of Greece* in 1784–1818. Macaulay had reviewed it with some severity in 1824, with the object, to use his own words, of 'reducing an over-praised writer to his proper level.'

b. 15. *Plutarch* (first century A. D.) wrote the Lives of 46 eminent Greeks and Romans, arranged in pairs so as to bring out contrasts of character and point moral and political lessons. Sir Thomas North's English version, made from Amyot's French translation of the Greek original, was the foundation of Shakspere's Roman tragedies.

15. *Thucydides,* the second great Greek historian (fifth century B. C.), wrote the history of the long struggle between Athens and Sparta which ended in the ruin of the former. Macaulay says earlier in this essay that 'Thucydides has surpassed all his rivals in the art of historical narration, in the art of producing an effect on the imagination, by skilful selection and disposition, without indulging in the license of invention.'

23. *Calcutta . . . Bombay* both in India, but at opposite ends of it. So, it is said, English people coming to Montreal are charged with messages for friends in Vancouver.

24. *Rollin and Barthelemi,* French historians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who in Macaulay's time had not ceased to be read.

693. *a.* 17. *make the worse appear the better reason.* Milton of Belial in *Paradise Lost,* II, 112–4. See p. 255.

24. *the poet Laureate,* Southey, who wrote excellent biographies of Nelson and Wesley, but no historical works of any value. His *Book of the Church,* Macaulay wrote a year or two later, 'contains some stories very prettily told; the rest is mere rubbish.' Southey was a copious writer of reviews and miscellaneous articles, in which he frequently attacks Lingard, who was a Roman Catholic. The latter's *History of England* (first edition 1819–25) at once became a standard work on account of its learning and insight; it is still held in high esteem.

26. *Brodie,* author of *A History of the British Empire from the Accession of Charles I to the Restoration* (1822). In 1836 he was appointed Historiographer Royal for Scotland.

29. *about to be reheard.* Macaulay no doubt refers to the *History of Greece* by George Grote, written with much more sympathy for democracy than Mitford's. It was not published till 1846–56, but the author began to collect materials as early as 1823.

37. *neglect the art of narration.* This was Macaulay's repeated complaint about the historians of his day; it was an art in which he himself excelled.

49. *the most frivolous and indolent.* This passage is an instance, not only of Macaulay's exaggeration of statement, but of his misconception of popular tastes. He writes in his review of Sir James Mackintosh: —'A history of England, written throughout in this manner, would be the most fascinating book in the language. It would be more in request at the circulating libraries than the last novel.' In his own History Macaulay went further than any one else towards justifying the claim he here puts forward; but he could not altogether succeed. The comparison with the historical novel, on which Macaulay so often insisted, is misleading, as Professor Montague points out. 'A novel and a history can never really be occupied with the same matter. Imaginative writing, whether in prose or verse, is always and above all concerned with the individual, and everything else is only accessory. History concerns itself with the great organized masses of men known as people or states and treats of individuals only in relation to such masses and the effect produced upon them by uncommon personal qualities.' Moreover, history deals with what actually happened, the historical novel with what might have happened.

b. 10. *conventional decencies . . . of the French drama,* the rules of classical tragedy which forbid the introduction of comic or commonplace elements and the representation of acts of violence on the stage, all the murders, etc., being reported by messengers. The bane of the French drama, from the English point of view, has been rather the observance of the Unities of Time and Place, the restriction of the plot to one critical event, and the consequent exclusion of incident.

15. *too trivial for the majesty of history.* This is a favorite idea with Macaulay. In 1824 he wrote that the true historian 'will not think anything too trivial for the gravity of history which is not too trivial to promote or diminish the happiness of man.' In the opening of his History (1848) he says: 'I shall cheerfully bear the reproach of having descended below the dignity of history, if I can succeed in placing before the English of the nineteenth century a true picture of the life of their ancestors.'

18. *King of Spain,* Philip III, who was said to have died from a fever brought on by the excessive heat of a fire, which the courtiers refused to damp because it was contrary to etiquette, the nobleman whose office it was being absent. But Lafuente in his *History of Spain* says the story was a pure invention of the French Ambassador, Bassompierre.

29. *The knowledge of it is valuable,* etc. It is characteristic of Macaulay that he has no appreciation of knowledge for its own sake.

35. *turnpike,* tollgate.

36. *Sir Matthew Mite,* the principal character in Foote's farce *The Nabob* (1772), described by Macaulay in his essay on Clive as 'an Anglo-Indian chief, dissolute, ungenerous, and tyrannical, ashamed of the humble friends of his youth, hating the aristocracy, yet childishly eager to be numbered among them, squandering his wealth on panders and flatterers, tricking out his chairmen with the most costly hot-house flowers, and astounding the ignorant with jargon about rupees, lacs, and jaghires.' He uses the fortune he has made in India to bribe his way into Parliament, becomes a member of the Antiquarian Society, and commits scores of extravagant follies similar to that referred to in the text.

37. *Lord Clarendon,* Charles II's chief minister and author of the *History of the Great Rebellion.*

46. *Hampden,* Oliver Cromwell's cousin and the man on the Parliamentary side whom Macaulay most admired. In his essay, *John Hampden,* he describes him as 'the first of those great English commoners whose plain addition of Mister has, to our ears, a more majestic sound than the proudest of the feudal titles.'

51. *Vane* was 'a singular combination of the statesman and the mystic.' According to Clarendon 'he did at some time believe that he was the person deputed to reign over the saints upon earth for a thousand years.' He was at one time Governor of Massachusetts, and his statue adorns the entrance hall of the Boston Public Library. He was a leading member of the Long Parliament and after the Restoration was put to death as a traitor.

694. *a.* 5. *Rupert* (Prince), nephew of Charles I and commander of the Royalist cavalry in the Civil War.

6. *Harrison and Fleetwood,* leaders on the Parliamentary side, who were famous for their religious zeal.

40. *Bishop Watson* (1737–1816), a distinguished defender of revealed religion against Tom Paine and other sceptical writers.

53. *at the close of the Seven Years' War* (1763), when France gave up Canada to Great Britain and acknowledged British supremacy in India.

55. *American war* of Independence.

b. 9. *late ministerial interregnum,* in 1827, on the death of Canning, when Goderich kept the ministry together for a few months, giving place in January, 1828, to a new government under Wellington and Peel.

695. *b.* 7. *Sir Walter Scott,* whose novels Macaulay praises in this and the following pages, is not now so highly esteemed as a historical authority for the customs and phraseology of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

32. *Froissart* was the chronicler, as Chaucer was the poet, of fourteenth century chivalry. The Tabard Inn, in Southwark, is the scene of the opening of the *Canterbury Tales.*

38. *Legate,* the ambassador of the Pope.

40. *palmers,* strictly, pilgrims who had been to the Holy Land and were therefore entitled to carry a branch or leaf of palm, but often used of pilgrims generally, and especially of those who gave all their lives to pilgrimage.

42. *refectory,* dining-hall.

52. *villain* (Low Latin *villanus*), a medieval villager or serf, who was bound to the soil and subject to the lord of the manor.

696. *a.* 11. *Tacitus* is described by Macaulay earlier in this essay as unrivaled for the delineation of character and certainly the greatest of the Latin historians.

40. *keep,* the central tower or stronghold of a medieval castle.

44. *oriel,* a window built out so as to form a recess. It is one of the features of Elizabethan domestic architecture, of which Longleat and Burleigh were conspicuous examples. The houses of the nobility built at this time surpassed all that had been built before in comfort and magnificence and all that have been built since in beauty.

b. 18. *Fifth-monarchy-man,* one of those who in the seventeenth century believed that the second coming of Christ was immediately at hand, and that it was the duty of Christians to be prepared to assist in establishing his reign by force, and in the meantime to repudiate all allegiance to any other government. The allusion is to the fifth kingdom foretold in Daniel ii, 44.

THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND

This short extract cannot give any adequate impression of the scope and methods of the great history, but it may be enough to suggest some idea of the way in which Macaulay carried out his conception of how history should be written.

697. *b.* 1. *Danby's administration.* 1674–9.

45. *clown,* country bumpkin.

698. *a.* 12. *Perrault* (1628–1703), a member of the French academy, the advocate of the superiority of modern literature against *Boileau,* who upheld the classics.

17. *Venice Preserved* (1682), a tragedy by Thomas Otway.

22. *Templars,* barristers or law students, of the Inner or Middle Temple.

30. *Racine* (1660–1699).

31. *Bossu* (1631–1680).

b. 33. *Lord Mayor's show,* a magnificent allegorical procession through the streets of London made every year when the Lord Mayor assumes office.

34. *Moneydroppers,* coiners or distributors of false money. *cart's tail,* at which they were whipped through the city.

699. *b.* 38. *Thoresby* (1658–1725).

42. *Pepys* (1632–1703), the great diarist.

700. *a.* 20. *higgler,* a wandering dealer in poultry and dairy produce.

b. 34. *parochial,* levied on the parish, the smallest territorial division in England.

51. *turnpike acts,* acts of parliament establishing trusts for the maintenance of roads on which tolls were collected. The toll-gates or toll-bars were abolished about the middle of the nineteenth century.

701. *a.* 31. *seven pounds,* nearly $35.

33. *fifteen pence,* 30c.

b. 37. *Vanbrugh* (1666–1726), writer of witty and licentious comedy.

NEWMAN: THE IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY

This discourse is one of a series given before the University of Dublin and addressed primarily to Catholic educators.

706. *a.* 54–55. *'the world is all before it where to choose.' Paradise Lost,* XII, 646.

707. *a.* 24. *St. Thomas.* Thomas Aquinas, the famous schoolman of the thirteenth century.

b. 46. *Pompey's Pillar,* a shaft of the Corinthian order near Alexandria. Its traditional association with Pompey is no longer believed to have any foundation in fact.

708. *b.* 33. *the Peripatetic,* an epithet applied to the school of Aristotle, traditionally because his discussions were carried on while walking about in the Lyceum.

35. *the Stoic,* the school of Greek philosophy founded by Zeno, about 340–265 B. C.

37–39. *Felix qui potuit,* etc. Virgil's *Georgics* II, 490–92.

709. *a.* 23. *the music of the spheres.* A proberbial phrase founded on the old belief that the celestial spheres were of crystal and made a harmonious sound as they revolved.

b. 2. *Salmasius.* A Dutch scholar, chiefly remembered by Englishmen for his controversy with Milton.

3. *Burman.* Francois Burmann, Dutch theologian of the seventeenth century.

4. *Imperat aut servit* collecta pecunia cuique [a man's money is either his master or his servant]. Horace, *Ep.* I, x, 48.

8–10. *Vis consili,* etc. Horace, *Odes* 3, iv, 65.

15. *Tarpeia.* According to legend, she betrayed the Roman citadel to the Sabines for promised treasure, but was crushed to death by the shields they threw upon her.

29. *Mosheim.* Johann Lorenz von Mosheim (1694–1755).

30. *Du Pin,* Louis Ellies (1657–1719), French ecclesiastical historian.

711. *a.* 54. *a so-called university,* etc. The University of London, a corporation for the giving of examinations and conferring of degrees had been founded in 1836.

b. 5–6. *the University of Oxford . . . some sixty years since.* One may read in this connection Gibbon's account of Oxford, in his *Memoirs.*

712. *a.* 46. *genius loci.* Spirit of the place.

713. *b.* 9–10. *'tongues in the trees . . . brooks.'* Slightly inaccurate quotation of *As You Like It,* II, i, 16.

CARLYLE: PAST AND PRESENT

This pamphlet, written during the first seven weeks of 1843, and published in April, has two sides: its historical side is founded on the twelfth century Chronicle of Jocelin de Brakelonde, describing the government of the Abbey of St. Edmund's, which had been printed in 1840 by the Camden Society; its social and political side is concerned with the England of 1842, alarmed by Chartist riots and at a loss which way to turn for relief of popular discontent. Carlyle was not in sympathy with any of the existing political parties; his pamphlet aimed at arousing the laboring classes, their employers, and the landed aristocracy to nobler ideals and a sense of their obligations to each other.

714. *a.* 11. *Laissez-faire,* freedom of manufacture, originally a protest against artificial restrictions of industry, but later the motto of the English free-traders. Carlyle denounced their policy because they were opposed to all state-interference with industry.

715. *a.* 1. *Mammon-Gospels.* Matthew vi, 24: 'Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.' *Evangel.* Gospel.

22. *'wine-and-walnuts philosophy.'* Philosophy suited to be taken with wine and walnuts after a good dinner.

27. *'Soul, take thy ease.'* See Luke xii, 19–20.

36. *his Grace of Castle-Rackrent.* Duke with an estate on which exorbitant rents are charged to the tenants.

39. *Land Auctioneership,* selling land to the highest bidder.

41. *Sliding-scales,* adjusting the duty on corn to the price of wheat.

42. *Plugson,* the typical manufacturer.

51. *Chancery,* the principal English court for dealing with business matters.

b. 12. *are discrepant,* disagree, show discrepancies.

48. *Abbot Samson,* the hero of the Chronicle of Jocelin de Brakelonde. See introductory note above.

716. *a.* 36. *Bucanier and Chactaw.* Carlyle's own spellings, which it has seemed best to leave, along with his profuse capitals.

46. *Caliban.* The monster in *The Tempest.*

48. *Fiat-Lux.* 'Let there be light.' See Genesis i, 3.

51. *garments rolled* in *blood.* See Isaiah ix, 5.

b. 11. *unkempt,* uncombed, raw.

15. *Howel Davies.* Not found in the Dictionary of National Biography. There was a famous West Indian pirate, Edward Davis, who flourished 1683–1702, and had at one time command of about 3,000 men.

717. *a.* 2. *Soul-Overseers.* Bishops, the Greek ἐπισκόπος, from which the word is derived, meaning literally an overseer.

3. *Hence these tears. Hinc illae lacrumae,* a saying in Terence's *Andria,* quoted by Cicero and Horace, and since established as a commonplace of literature.

44. *William the Norman Bastard.* William I, Duke of Normandy and King of England, was of illegitimate birth.

45. *Taillefer* (literally 'cut-iron'), a minstrel of William's who at the battle of Hastings obtained from him the privilege of striking the first blow.

52. *orthoepy,* right speech.

b. 44. *tipstaves,* bailiffs, constables.

718. *a.* 7. *Westminster* Hall, one of the oldest English places of legislation and the administration of justice. Charles I was tried here in 1649.

20. *Bastille,* a great prison in Paris, destroyed at the French Revolution. Carlyle applies the term to the workhouses, in which the poor take refuge in England when they have no employment.

21. *Westminster.* Parliament.

30. *articulated,* systematized, organized.

34. *Midas-eared.* Midas, a mythological king of Phrygia, who had asses' ears, and who obtained from the gods the embarrassing gift that everything he touched turned to gold.

57. *Duces, leaders* (Latin).

'on a minimum of four thousand five hundred.' Some one had said that £4,500 (about $20,000) was a minimum salary for an English bishop.

b. 24. *Mammonish,* done merely to get money.

719. *a.* 18. *Ezechiel.* There is no reference to the potter's wheel in Ezechiel. Carlyle probably trusted to his remembrance of Jeremiah xviii, 1–6, and ascribed the passage to the wrong prophet.

23. *amorphous,* shapeless.

35. *shambling,* unable to stand straight.

35. *squint-cornered,* irregular.

37. *vessel of dishonor.* Romans ix, 21: 'Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?'

47. *festering,* stagnant, decaying.

51. *How blessed,* etc., blessed for the man's life, no matter what kind of work it is.

57. *awakens,* nominative 'force' two lines above.

b. 10. *schools,* of philosophy.

11. *vortices,* whirlpools.

23. *Sir Christopher* Wren, after St. Paul's was destroyed by the great fire of London (1666) was appointed architect of the new Cathedral, and carried his design to accomplishment in 1710, in spite of the many difficulties Carlyle here refers to. Nell Gwyn was a popular actress of the time, a great favorite with Charles II, who spoke of her on his death-bed. 'Defender of the Faith' is a title conferred by the Pope upon Henry VIII for his answer to Luther, and retained by all the English sovereigns since.

41. *architectonics,* the principles of building.

720. *a.* 3. *monument.* Sir Christopher Wren's tomb in St. Paul's bears the inscription: *'Si monumentum quaeris circumspice.'* 'If you seek his monument, look around you.'

50. *Ursa Major,* the Great Bear, a group of stars near the North Pole, popularly known as Charles's Wain or the Dipper.

b. 33. *'Religion.'* Carlyle now returns to the thought of the last paragraph but one.

36. *Brahmins,* the highest caste in the Hindoo religion.

Antinomians, a sect who maintained that the moral law was not binding upon Christians.

37. *Spinning Dervishes,* Mohammedan friars who whirl round and round in a state of religious excitement 'till collapse ensue and sometimes death.'

51. *immethodic,* without method, irregular.

721. *a.* 12. *Shovel-hat,* a broad-brimmed hat, turned up at the sides and projecting in front, worn by some clergymen.

Talfourd-Mahon Copyright Act (1842) gave the author copyright for forty-two years. The meaning is that people should attack Ignorance, without waiting to be invested with authority, or promised reward and legal protection.

22. *Sinai thunders.* See Exodus xix, 16–19.

23. *speech of Whirlwinds.* See 1 Kings xix, 11–12.

34. *work,* etc. John ix, 4: 'I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.'

43. *Kepler* (1571–1630), *Newton* (1642–1727), two of the world's greatest mathematicians and astronomers.

46. *'Agony of bloody sweat.'* See Luke xxii, 44.

b. 15. *denizen,* one born in the country, having rights of citizenship; opposed to 'foreigner.'

24. *Mayfair,* the fashionable quarter of London.

34. *Phantasm,* an appearance, not a reality.

40. *unprofitable servants.* See Luke xvii, 10.

53. *Eldorado,* the 'golden' land dreamed of by the Spanish explorers of America.

722. *a.* 1. *St. Stephen's.* The Houses of Parliament.

20. *Owen,* Robert (1771–1858), a socialist reformer, who, amid many other projects intended to benefit working people, established in 1832 an 'Equitable Labor Exchange.' It proved a failure.

29. *Downing*-street, where many of the government offices are in London.

723. *a.* 8. *Manes,* the deified souls of the departed, the gods of the Lower World.

15. *Acheron,* a river in the Lower World; often used as synonym for the Lower World itself.

17. *Dante* (1265–1321), the great Italian poet from whose *Divine Comedy* (*Inferno* xv, 55) Carlyle quotes below.

25. *Se tu segui la tua stella.* 'If thou followest thy star.'

33. *Cerberus,* the dog who guarded Hades.

30. *Eccovi . . . all' Inferno.* 'Behold the man who has been in hell.'

36. *Dryden.* See 269. 79.

42. *Eurydice,* beloved of Orpheus, who went down to Tartarus to rescue her.

b. 3. *lath-and-plaster hats.* Used for advertisements.

7. *Controversies* were raging at this time in the Church of England as to whether the preacher should wear a black gown or a white surplice.

10. *Corn-Laws,* imposing duties on wheat, which made bread dear, and pampered industry by increasing wages. Abolished 1846.

23. *Great Taskmaster's eye.* Milton's Sonnet *On his having arrived at the age of 23* ends

> All is, if I have grace to use it so,
> As ever in my great Task-Master's eye.

31. *Galvanism,* electricity.

55. *Antæus,* a giant in classical mythology, who renewed his strength by contact with the earth, his mother.

724. *a.* 56. *adscititious,* accidental.

b. 19. *the proper Epic,* not of military heroes, or of tailors, but of captains of industry.

725. *a.* 18. *Stockport,* a manufacturing town in the North of England, where, at this time, many working people lived in cellars.

19. *Poor-Law Bastilles,* workhouses.

30. *villani, bordarii, sochemanni,* mediæval Latin terms for serfs.

43. *arrestment,* arrest.

46. *Dryasdust,* the scholarly historian or mediæval chronicler.

b. 6. *Phalaris,* a tyrant of ancient Sicily, who was said to burn men alive in a bronze bull.

31. *Dahomey,* a kingdom in West Africa.

33. *Mungo Park* (1771–1806), an African explorer who tells in his *Travels* the incident referred to by Carlyle.

40. *Calabash,* a tree common in tropical America, but said to have been introduced from Guinea. The hard shell of the fruit is used for bottles, cups, and other vessels.

52. *Gurth . . . Cedric the Saxon.* Characters in Scott's *Ivanhoe.*

726. *a.* 2. *boscage and umbrage,* wood and shade.

b. 35. *Tancred of Hauteville* (1078–1112), one of the leaders of the first crusade.

38. *cased in tin.* The Champion of England, who appears at the Coronation ceremony, wears armor — a survival of ancient custom which Carlyle wishes to ridicule.

49. *Hereward,* a Saxon hero who withstood William I in the Fen Counties, on the east coast of England.

51. *Waltheof,* Earl of Northumberland, beheaded in 1076 for conspiring against William I.

727. *a.* 35. *Corn-Laws,* maintained for the advantage of the country landowners, whose main activity, according to Carlyle, was the preservation and slaughter of partridges.

37. *bedlamism,* lunacy.

38. *bush,* to plant bushes on game preserves so as to prevent the use of nets by poachers.

40. *Par la Splendeur de Dieu,* a Norman oath. 'By God's Splendor.'

44. *Joe Manton* (d. 1835), a famous London gun maker.

b. 14. *Charter.* The agitation for the People's Charter was coming to a height when *Past and Present* was written. The six 'points' in it were (1) manhood suffrage; (2) equal electoral districts; (3) vote by ballot; (4) annual parliaments; (5) abolition of the property qualification for members of the House of Commons; (6) payment of members of parliament.

25. *St. Mary Axe,* a London parish.

30. *Wahngasse of Weissnichtwo,* the imaginary street of 'Nowhere,' in which lived Terr Teufelsdröckh (Devil's dung), the hero of Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus.* Carlyle here returns to the style and thought of his earlier work, and quotes from his own hero — really from himself, for Teufelsdröckh is merely Carlyle under a thin disguise.

41. *mein Lieber,* my dear fellow. The imaginary German philosopher intersperses his speech with scraps of his native language.

728. *a.* 1. *Sansculottic,* revolutionary.

2. *ruinous,* because *sansculottic* literally means 'without breeches.'

10. *Keinewegs,* by no means.

11, *Sumptuary Laws,* regulating the dress and way of living of various classes.

14. *amphibium,* a compromise, neither one thing nor another.

24. *Cheruscan,* a German tribe mentioned by Julius Cæsar.

b. 1. *Sedan,* a town on the French frontier with many cloth factories; now more famous for its surrender by Napoleon III to the Germans in 1870. *Huddersfield,* one of the centers of the Yorkshire cloth trade. *Nescience.* ignorance.

50. *Windsor Georges,* decorations or titles.

53. *Franchiser,* voter, elector.

56. *Heavy-wet,* ale.

729. *a.* 48. *wardmotes,* meetings of the voters of a small district.

55. *Palaver,* Parliament, which literally means 'talking-place.'

b. 24. *Pococurantism,* carelessness, inattention.

25. *Beau-Brummelism,* dandyism.

27. *Byronism,* sentimental egotism. *Dead Sea,* in Palestine, on the site of the once flourishing 'cities of the plain.'

30. *Sabbath-day,* of witches and apes.

730. *a.* 16. *lion-soirées,* evening entertainments given for the exhibition of social 'lions' or notabilities.

27. *dispiritments,* discouragements.

40. *Histrios,* actors.

47. *Quackhood,* quackery.

54. *ninth-parts of men,* tailors.

b. 5. *succedanea,* substitutes.

36. *Bobus* Higgins, 'Sausage-maker on the great scale . . . with his cash-accounts and larders dropping fatness, with his respectabilities, warm garnitures, and pony-chaise,' is Carlyle's incarnation of commercial success.

47. *Friend Prudence.* 'Prudence keeps a thousand workmen; has striven in all ways to attach them to him; has provided conversational soirees; play-grounds, bands of music for the young ones; went even "the length of buying them a drum"; all which has turned out to be an excellent investment. For a certain person, marked here by a black stroke, whom we shall name Blank, living over the way — he also keeps somewhere about a thousand men; but has done none of these things for them, nor any other thing, except due payment of the wages by supply-and-demand. Blank's workers are perpetually getting into mutiny, into broils and coils: every six months, we suppose, Blank has a strike; every one month, every day and every hour, they are fretting and obstructing the short-sighted Blank, pilfering from him, wasting and idling for him, omitting and committing for him. "I would not," says Friend Prudence, "exchange my workers for his *with seven thousand pounds to boot.*" '

8. *Law-ward,* 'maintainer and keeper of Heaven's laws'— Carlyle's interpretation of the word 'lord.' Its true origin is, however, *hlaf-weard,* loaf-ward or keeper of bread, as that of 'lady' is *hlaf-dige,* kneader of bread. Cf. 725. *b.* 21.

731. *a.* 23. *flunky-species,* people with the ideas of footmen.

Chactaw, Indian, heathen.

48. *my Transcendental friends.* Carlyle was in correspondence with two of the New England Transcendentalists — Ralph Waldo Emerson and George Ripley. The latter defined Transcendentalists as people who 'believe in an order of truth that transcends the sphere of the external senses. Their leading idea is the supremacy of mind over matter. Hence they maintain that the truth of religion does not depend on tradition or historical facts, but has an unswerving witness in the soul.' As may be gathered from the text, Carlyle was not altogether in sympathy with his Transcendental admirers. He wrote to Emerson in 1842: 'You seem to me in danger of dividing yourselves from the Fact of this present Universe, in which alone, ugly as it is, can I find any anchorage, and soaring away after Ideas, Beliefs, Revelations, and such like — into perilous altitudes, as I think.'

52. *Demiurgusships,* Lordships. The Demiurgus is in the Platonic philosophy the Maker of the world. It means literally 'one who works for the people,' and in some Greek states was the title of a magistrate.

56. *Chronos,* in Greek mythology Kronos, the ruler of heaven and earth until his son Zeus (Latin Jupiter or Jove) drove him from the throne. *Odin,* the All-father of Norse mythology, the same as the Old English Woden, whose name is preserved in 'Wednesday.'

57. *St. Olaf,* who early in the eleventh century converted Norway to Christianity. *the Dollar,* etc. The promised change in American ideals was probably suggested to Carlyle by Emerson, who wrote to him from Concord on Oct. 30, 1840: 'We are all a little wild here with numberless projects of social reform. Not a reading man but has a draft of a new Community in his waistcoat pocket. I am gently mad myself, and am resolved to live cleanly. George Ripley is talking up a colony of agriculturists and scholars, with whom he threatens to take the field and the book. One man renounces the use of animal food; and another of coin; and another of domestic hired service; and another of the state; and on the whole we have a commendable share of reason and hope.'

b. 2. *Socinian* from two Italian theologians of the sixteenth century named Socinus, who did not believe that Christ was God. Emerson and Ripley had both resigned their charges as Unitarian ministers.

5. *retire into the fields,* etc. Carlyle here refers to the Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education, which Emerson mentions in the passage quoted above. Emerson, though in sympathy with the enterprise, took no active part in it. The leader was George Ripley, and another active member, John S. Dwight, had also been a Unitarian minister. The Farm was managed on a system of 'brotherly co-operation,' and no one was paid more than a dollar a day; provision was made for educational courses of an advanced character, but after a year or two it was found that the income did not meet the expenditure. Nathaniel Hawthorne was one of the original members of the community, and has left an account of his experiences in *The Blithedale Romance.*

20. *Exeter Hall,* the meeting place of various Evangelical societies every May. It is in the Strand and has since been bought by the Y. M. C. A.

22. *Puseyism,* from Pusey, an Oxford professor and one of the leaders of the High Church movement which was attracting public attention about this time.

32. *why will,* why not *shall,* expressing determination on the part of the speaker.

732. *a.* 11. *Long-acre,* a London street where carriages were sold. A witness in a famous trial in 1823 had described a certain person as 'respectable,' and when asked why, answered, 'he always

kept a gig.' This furnished Carlyle with a text on which he was never tired of preaching against the superficiality of current standards of worth.

14. *Simulacrum* (Latin), image.

18. *Ilion,* Troy; *Latium,* the country about Rome, scenes of the *Iliad* and the *Æneid. Mayfair,* a fashionable part of London, east of Hyde Park; so called from a Fair formerly held there in the month of May.

23. *Phrygians,* inhabitants of Asia Minor, Trojans.

24. *jötuns,* a supernatural race of giants in Scandinavian mythology. The heroism of the future will consist in overcoming the forces of nature and the evil passions of the heart of man.

30. *Fribbles,* triflers.

'*bush,*' preserve game. See 727. *a.* 38, note.

35. *the Subtle Fowler,* Destiny.

42. *with beards on their chins,* grown men, no longer children.

b. 24. *Brindley* (1716–72) , engineer of the Bridgewater and Grand Trunk Canals.

25. *Goethe,* 'for the last hundred years, by far the notablest of all Literary Men.'— Heroes and Hero Worship. *Odin,* celebrated by Carlyle in his lecture on 'The Hero as Divinity.' *Arkwright* (1732–92), inventor of cotton spinning machinery.

35. *Bath-garter.* The orders of the Garter and the Bath are among the highest honors conferred by the English sovereign. Carlyle confuses the two, for the purpose of expressing contempt for such decorations regarded as claims to respect.

36. *George,* the jewel which forms part of the insignia of the Order of the Garter.

43. *Duke of Weimar.* Carlyle had written in the previous chapter: 'A modern Duke of Weimar, not a god he either, but a human duke, levied, as I reckon, in rents and taxes and all incomings whatsoever, less than several of our English Dukes do in rent alone. The Duke of Weimar, with these incomings, had to govern, judge, defend, everyway administer *his* Dukedom. He does all this as few others did: and he improves lands besides all this, makes river-embankments, maintains not soldiers only but Universities and Institutions;— and in his Court were these four men: Wieland, Herder, Schiller, Goethe. . . . I reckon that this one Duke of Weimar did more for the Culture of his Nation than all the English Dukes and *Duces* now extant, or that were extant since Henry the Eighth gave them the Church Lands to eat, have done for theirs!'

47. *The Future hides in it,* etc. This is a stanza from Goethe's poem 'Symbolum,' introductory to the series entitled 'Loge.' Carlyle had given a translation of the whole poem earlier in *Past and Present* (end of Bk. III). He now recalls it as the final thought he wishes to impress upon the minds of his readers.

49. *thorow,* through.

RUSKIN: TRAFFIC

734. *a.* 12. *carelessness,* lack of interest.

b. 28. *pitch farthing,* pitch and toss, 'matching' coppers.

735. *a.* 18. Teniers (1582–1649), the great Dutch realist painter.

29. *Titian* (1477–1576), the leading artist of the Venetian school.

30. *Turner* (1775–1851), the greatest of English landscape painters and Ruskin's particular favorite. See introductory biography, 733. 4.

49. *Fleet Street,* a great London thoroughfare, where many London publishers have offices.

54. *classifying,* dividing into classes.

b. 7. *costermonger,* peddler of apples ('costards') and other small fruits.

8. *Newgate Calendar,* a publication giving accounts of sensational crimes. Newgate is a London prison.

736. *a.* 4–6. Quoted from Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel,* Canto 1.

38. *steel-traps . . . spring guns.* Appliances used against poachers, but here allegorically signifying the armaments of modern nations.

54. *Bedlam,* the monastery of St. Mary of Bethlehem in London, later used as an asylum for the insane.

b. 13. *Armstrongs,* big guns manufactured by the great English firm of Armstrong.

19. *black eagles* of Austria. Ruskin means that the English let the great military nations alone.

52. *Inigo Jones . . . Sir Christopher Wren,* the great English architects of the seventeenth century. The former planned the royal palace of Whitehall in London, the latter St. Paul's Cathedral, both in the Italian style.

737. *a.* 50. *This is none other than the house of God.* See Genesis xxviii. 10–17.

b. 25. *Thou, when thou prayest.* See Matthew vi, 5–6.

49. *Lares,* Latin gods of the hearth, household gods.

738. *a.* 5. *The Seven Lamps.* See introductory biography, p. 733.

b. 48. *Bosphorus,* the strait dividing Europe from Asia.

739. *a.* 9. *to the Jews.* See 1 Corinthians i, 23.

b. 51. *Tetzel,* a seller of papal indulgences who provoked the indignation of Luther.

b. 55. *bals masqués,* masked balls. They were a feature of the French frivolity which preceded the Revolution and the guillotine.

740. *a.* 6. *Revivalist,* of classical architecture, as seen in the royal palace of Versailles, near Paris, and the papal palace of the Vatican at Rome.

17. *sevenths of time,* Sunday, one-seventh of the week.

38. *Acropolis,* the hill overlooking Athens; the site of the Parthenon and other Greek temples.

39. *walls of Babylon . . . temple of Ephesus,* monuments of antiquity.

b. 23. *affairs of exchange.* See Matthew xxi, 12–13.

34. *quartering.* As armies do when they occupy a country. *color,* pretence.

55. '*carry.*' At the point of the bayonet.

741. *b.* 2. *St. George,* the English national saint.

3. *semi-fleeced . . . proper . . . fields,* terms of heraldry.

23. *Comforter,* the Holy Ghost. See John xiv, 16–17.

27. *Agora,* market.

742. *a.* 4. *Olympus . . . Pelion . . . Ossa.* Mountains of classical antiquity. See *Hamlet* V, i, 304–7.

743. *a.* 21. *Solomon made gold.* See 1 Kings x, 14–17.

51. *Bolton priory,* a beautiful abbey in Wharfedale, Yorkshire.

56. *'men may come.'* Quoted from Tennyson's *The Brook.*

744. *b.* 7. *plain of Dura,* where Nebuchadnezzar set up a golden image. See Daniel iii, 1.

25. *pleasantness . . . peace.* See Proverbs iii, 17.

35. not made with hands. See *2* Corinthians v, **1.**

TENNYSON: MARIANA

745. 8. *moated grange.* Tennyson printed, as the motto of this poem, the phrase, 'Mariana in the moated grange,' adapted from a passage in Shakspere's *Measure for Measure,* III, i. The situation of Shakspere's Mariana, then, probably furnished the germ of Tennyson's conception.

THE POET

747. 15. *Calpe,* Gibraltar. *Caucasus,* the Caucasian Mountains.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

This was probably Tennyson's earliest study from the Arthurian legend. It may be compared with his later embodiment of the story in *Lancelot and Elaine.*

5. *Camelot.* In Cornwall. The legendary seat of King Arthur's court.

9. *Shalott.* Malory's Astolat. According to Palgrave, this poem was suggested to Tennyson by an Italian romance upon the *Donna di Scalotta.* This would account for the form, Shalott.

748. 84. *the golden Galaxy.* The Milky Way.

107. *'Tirra Lirra.' Tirelirer,* in French, signifies to sing like a lark.

THE PALACE OF ART

The ethical burden of this poem has been well stated by Tennyson's friend, James Spedding. The poem 'represents allegorically the condition of a mind which, in the love of beauty and the triumphant consciousness of knowledge and intellectual supremacy, in the intense enjoyment of its own power and glory, has lost sight of its relation to man and God.'

750. 99. *Saint Cecily.* Compare **276.** 138–47, and note.

105. *Uther's deeply-wounded son,* King Arthur. See below, p. 758.

111. *The wood-nymph,* Egeria. *The Ausonian king,* Numa Pompilius.

115. *Indian Cama.* The Hindu god of love.

117. *Europa.* According to the Greek myth, Europa, sister of Cadmus, was carried to Crete by Zeus, who assumed the form of a white bull. 'Europa and the Bull' is the subject of a famous painting by Titian.

121. *Ganymede,* the cup-bearer of Zeus, who was conveyed to Olympus by an eagle.

137. *the Ionian father,* etc. Homer.

163. *Verulam.* Francis Bacon was created Baron Verulam in 1618. See pp. 187–199.

171–2. *as morn from Memnon,* etc. A colossus near Thebes, Egypt, was believed by the Greeks to represent this solar deity and to give forth a musical sound when reached by the rays of the rising sun.

752. 219. *Like Herod,* etc. See Acts xii, 21–23.

226. *The airy hand,* etc. See Daniel v, 24–27.

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

753. 2. *The Legend of Good Women.* For its place among Chaucer's works, see p. 4.

27. *tortoise,* the roof formed by the shields of soldiers held over their heads.

754. 87. *a daughter of the gods,* etc. Helen.

100. *One that stood beside.* Iphigenia, the daughter of Agamemnon. Part of the details are drawn from Aeschylus' *Agamemnon,* 225–49, and from Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura,* I, 85–100.

122. *Sudden I heard,* etc. The description of Cleopatra is based chiefly on Shakspere's *Antony and Cleopatra,* though there are touches from Horace, *Ode* i.

755. 145. *Canopus.* One of the brightest of the first magnitude stars. It is not visible in our middle northern latitudes.

154. *the other.* Octavius Cæsar.

176. *Then I heard,* etc. Jephthah's daughter. See Judges xi.

756. 250. *Rosamond.* See **375.** 95, note.

254. *Eleanor,* Henry II's queen. She is said to have slain Rosamond with her own hand or to have forced her to drink poison.

260. *Fulvia.* Antony's first wife. Cleopatra means, 'You should have slain your rival.'

264. *The captain of my dreams.* The morning star, an allusion to l. 3.

265–6. *her, who clasped . . . father's head.* Margaret Roper, the daughter of Sir Thomas More, is said to have rescued his head from London Bridge where it had been placed after his execution for high treason, and to have kept it until she died.

267–71. *Or her who knew,* etc. Eleanor, wife of Edward I, who saved his life by applying her lips to his wound after he had been stabbed with a poisoned dagger.

ST. AGNES EVE

See **640.** 1, note.

OF OLD SAT FREEDOM ON THE HEIGHTS

758. 15. *the triple forks.* The trident of Neptune, symbolic of maritime supremacy.

SIR GALAHAD

25. *When down the stormy crescent goes.* After a victory over the Saracen.

53. *the leads.* The roofs of lead.

84. *Until I find the holy Grail.* The sacred vessel in which the blood of the Lord was caught as

he hung upon the Cross, was said to have been carried to Britain by Joseph of Arimathea. It was an object of quest among the knights of the Round Table, but only Galahad was pure enough to achieve it. See Tennyson's *Holy Grail* in *The Idylls of the King* and Malory's *Morte d' Arthur*.

A FAREWELL

759. The Tennysons left their old home at Somersby in 1837. There are references to the incident and to the same brook in *In Memoriam*.

MORTE D'ARTHUR

For Malory's *Morte d' Arthur*, Bk. XXI, upon which this poem is based, see p. 21. The poem was afterward incorporated, with additions, into *The Idylls of the King*.

4. *Lyonnesse.* A mythical region, off the shores of Cornwall, now supposedly submerged by the sea.

15. *The goodliest fellowship,* etc. The Round Table.

21. *Camelot.* See **747.** 5, note.

23. *Merlin.* The wise magician of Arthur's court.

31. *samite,* a kind of silk.

43. *hest,* behest, command.

760. 139. *the northern morn.* Aurora borealis.

140. *isles of winter,* icebergs.

761. 186. *harness,* armor.

215. *greaves,* shin pieces. *cuisses,* thigh pieces.

762. 259. *the island valley of Avilion.* Tennyson's description is influenced by classical conceptions of the Fortunate Islands. See **763.** 63, note.

ULYSSES

The germ of this poem is to be found in Dante's *Inferno* xxvi, 85–142.

2. *these barren crags,* the bleak island of Ithaca.

3. *mete,* measure.

10. *the rainy Hyades.* A part of the constellation Taurus, supposed to bring rain. Virgil's *pluvias Hyadas.*

763. 63. *the Happy Isles.* Vaguely thought of by the ancients as somewhere in the Atlantic off the west coast of Africa, perhaps the Cape Verde or the Canary Islands. Tennyson's description of Avilion borrows from classical sources. See **762.** 259, ff.

LOCKSLEY HALL

Suggestions for this poem were derived from the *Amriolkais,* an Arabian poem translated by Sir William Jones. *Works,* Vol. IV, pp. 247–57.

8. *Orion.* A conspicuous constellation often mentioned by Tennyson.

9. *the Pleiads.* A group of stars in the constellation Taurus. A similar reference occurs in the *Amriolkais.*

765. 75. *Comfort scorned of devils.* The reference is to *Paradise Lost,* Books I and II, *passim.*

75–76. *this is truth the poet sings,* etc. *Nessun maggior dolore, Che ricordarsi del tempo felice Nella miseria.*— Dante, *Inferno* v, 121–3.

766. 155. *Mahratta-battle.* With the Mahrattas, a warlike and powerful Hindu people of mid-India, the British had a number of serious wars between 1750 and 1818.

767. 180. *Joshua's moon in Ajalon.* See Joshua x, 12–13.

182. *the ringing grooves of change.* Tennyson has explained that when he traveled by the first train from Liverpool to Manchester in 1830 it was night and he thought that the wheels ran in a groove. 'Then I wrote this line.'

184. *Cathay,* China.

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

Composed 'in a Lincolnshire lane at five o'clock in the morning between blossoming hedges.' (Tennyson.)

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

Arthur Henry Hallam died at Vienna, in September, 1833. He had been Tennyson's most intimate friend at Cambridge and was betrothed to Tennyson's sister. He was a youth of great intellectual promise and exceptional purity of spirit. The 'elegies' as they were called which make up *In Memoriam,* were composed at various times during the seventeen years which intervened between Hallam's death and their publication in 1850.

769. 5. *orbs of light and shade.* The eyes.

8. *the skull.* As symbolizing death.

35. *merit lives from man to man.* That is, man in comparison with man.

42. *Confusions of a wasted youth.* This section of the poem was written in 1849, while much of the poem had been composed years before.

XIX

1–4. *The Danube to the Severn,* etc. Vienna, where Hallam died, is on the Danube; while Clevedon Church, where he is buried, is on the river Severn near its confluence with Bristol Channel.

5–8. *There twice a day the Severn fills,* etc. The tide pushes back into the Severn and up the tributary Wye.

LV

770. 7–8. *So careful of the type,* etc. Type, species. In lvi, Tennyson points out that types, as well as individuals, become extinct.

LXIV

1. *thou,* the spirit of Hallam.

LXVII

3. *that broad water of the west.* The mouth of the Severn. See xix, 1–4, note.

LXXXVIII

2. *quicks,* hedges. Literally, living things.

MAUD; A MONODRAMA

772. 36. *vitriol madness.* The frenzy produced by chemicalized liquor.

40. *center-bits.* The drills of the safe-blower.

43. *poisoned poison.* Adulterated drugs.

45. *Timour-Mammon.* Timour (Tamerlane), 'the Scourge of the World,' is united with the god of riches to name an evil potency of the modern world.

773. 89. *Orion.* Compare *Locksley Hall,* **763.** 9, and note.

132. *Birds in the high Hall-garden,* etc. Tennyson called attention to the imitation of the cries of the rooks, ll. 134 and 158, and of the smaller birds, l. 142.

774. 206. *Lebanon.* The cedars of Lebanon are said to have been brought into England by the crusaders, on their return from the Holy Land.

227. *A sad astrology.* The old astrology was based upon a belief that the movements of stars controlled the destiny of men; but modern science teaches us that they have no such significance.

775. 297. *the planet of love.* Venus, as morning star.

392. *the Breton Strand.* The coast of Brittainy, in France.

777. 411. *that of Lamech.* 'I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.' Genesis iv, 23.

456. *O that 't were possible,* etc. This section of the poem, in slightly different form, had been published in *The Tribute,* 1837. Tennyson's friend, Sir John Simeon, who greatly admired the verses, suggested that they needed some introduction to make them fully intelligible. Tennyson undertook to carry out the suggestion, and *Maud* was the result.

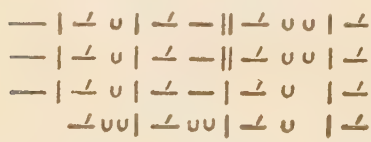
TITHONUS

Although not published until 1860, this poem was written at about the same time as *Ulysses.* It is based upon the Greek myth according to which Tithonus, a mortal, being beloved by Eos, goddess of the dawn, the gods conferred upon him the gift of immortality. As they had neglected the gift of immortal youth, he gradually dwindled away and was metamorphosed into a grasshopper. The poem should be read as a myth of the dawn.

MILTON

This is one of a group of poems which Tennyson styled 'experiments in quantity.' It imitates the Alcaic stanza of Horace and other classical poets. To those who are unacquainted with classical prosody perhaps the best advice is that which Tennyson gave in regard to a similar experiment: 'Read it as prose and the meter will come right.'

The following time scheme may, however, be found useful in interpreting the meter:



NORTHERN FARMER

This poem is written in the Lincolnshire dialect with which Tennyson was familiar from childhood. It will be more easily understood if read aloud.

779. 1. *'asta,* hast thou. *liggin',* lying.

2. *nowt,* nothing.

10. *issen,* himself.

780. 11. *towd,* told. *toithe,* tithe.

14. *barne,* bairn, child.

16. *raate,* tax.

18. *buzzard-clock,* cockchafer.

23. *'Siver,* howsoever.

27. *thaw summun said it.* Though some may have said it.

28. *stubb'd,* grubbed, cleared.

30. *boggle,* goblin, bogle.

31. *butter-bump,* bittern.

32. *raäved,* rived, tore. *rembled,* removed.

34. *'enemies,* anemones.

35. *toaner,* the one or the other.

36. *'soize,* the assizes.

37. *Dubbut,* do but.

38. *bracken,* brake, fern. *fuzz,* furze, gorse.

41. *nobbut,* only.

49. *'aapoth,* half-penny's worth.

52. *hoalms,* flats, lowlands.

54. *sewerloy,* surely.

61. *kittle o' steam,* steam-engine.

62. *Huzzin' an' maazin'.* Buzzing and amazing.

781. 65. *atta,* art thou.

66. *'toattler,* teetotaler. *a's haollus i' the oud taale,* he 's always at the old story.

THE REVENGE

Compare the account from Hakluyt, above, p. 92 ff.

TO VIRGIL

783. 1. *Ilion's . . . fire.* The reference is to Æneas's description of the burning of Troy. *Æneid* II.

3. *he that sang the 'Works and Days.'* Hesiod.

5. *Thou that singest . . . herd.* Reference to the *Georgics.*

7. *Tityrus.* See *Eclogue* I.

8. *the poet-satyr.* See *Eclogue* VI.

9. *the Pollio.* See *Eclogue* IV.

11. *Thou that seest Universal Nature,* etc. See *Æneid* VI, 727.

14. *Golden branch,* etc. See *Æneid* VI, 208.

16. *the Northern Island,* etc. See *Eclogue,* I, 67.

19. *Mantovano,* Mantuan. From Mantua, Virgil's birthplace.

FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE

The refrain, 'Brother, hail and farewell,' is from Catullus's invocation at his brother's tomb. See Catullus, ci.

1. *Desenzano . . . Sirmione.* Villages on the Lago di Garda, largest of the northern Italian lakes.

2. *O venusta Sirmio* [O Ancient Sirmio]. See Catullus xxxi.

8. *Lydian laughter of the Garda Lake.* See Catullus xxxi.

CROSSING THE BAR

Tennyson requested of his son that these verses should be placed at the close of all collections of his poems. They were written in his eighty-first year and 'came in a moment.'

784. 3. *moaning of the bar.* The poem was suggested by the popular superstition that the tide moans in going out, whenever a death has occurred.

15. *my Pilot* 'that Divine and Unseen who is always guiding us.' (Tennyson.)

BROWNING: SONGS FROM 'PIPPA PASSES'

Browning was walking alone in a wood on the outskirts of London when the image flashed upon him of 'someone walking thus alone through life; one apparently too obscure to leave a trace of his or her passage, yet exercising a lasting, though unconscious, influence at every step of it.' This original conception is charmingly worked out in the character of Felippa or Pippa, the little silk winder of Asolo, a hill town in North Italy which had taken Browning's fancy during his first visit. Pippa is introduced in her humble room springing out of bed on her one holiday — New Year's Day, and singing the first of her songs, as here given. During the day she passes in and out of the village, singing her artless songs, and unconsciously influencing the lives of those about her. The second song, 'The year 's at the Spring,' awakens two wicked people to a sense of their guilt and the divine government of the world. The third, 'Give her but a least excuse to love me,' rouses a young painter to a higher conception of love and art. The explanation of this song is given in the lines which follow in the original: —

> What name was that the little girl sang forth?
> Kate? The Cornaro, doubtless, who renounced
> The crown of Cyprus to be lady here
> At Asolo, where still her memory stays,
> And peasants sing how once a certain page
> Pined for the grace of her so far above
> His power of doing good to 'Kate the Queen —
> She never could be wronged, be poor,' he sighed,
> 'Need him to help her!'

Browning gives us in the first five lines of each stanza the page's song; in the last four the comments of the Queen and her maid, who overhear him. Caterina (or Kate) Cornaro was a Venetian citizen who married the King of Cyprus, and after his death, resigning her authority to the Republic, retired to keep a small court at the Venetian village of Asolo, where she 'wielded her little sceptre for her people's good, and won their love by gentleness and grace.'

786. 18. *jesses.* Straps for hawks' legs.

MY LAST DUCHESS

Ferrara, which Browning gives as the scene of this poem, is a town in North Italy, not far from Venice. It was the capital of the House of Este, who were among the most accomplished and the most cruel of the tyrants of the Italian Renascence. Symonds says in his *Age of the Despots:* 'Under the House of Este, Ferrara was famous throughout Italy for its gaiety and splendor. No city enjoyed more brilliant or more frequent public shows. Nowhere did the aristocracy retain so much feudal magnificence and chivalrous enjoyment. The square castle of red brick, which still stands in the middle of the town, was thronged with poets, players, fools who enjoyed an almost European reputation, court flatterers, knights, pages, scholars, and fair ladies. But beneath its cube of solid masonry, on a level with the moat, shut out from daylight by the sevenfold series of iron bars, lay dungeons in which the objects of the Duke's displeasure clanked chains and sighed their lives away.'

3. *Frà.* The painter, who is an imaginary character, was a monk like Fra Angelico and other Italian artists of the Renascence.

787. 45–6. There has been much discussion as to whether these two lines imply that the Duke gave orders for his wife's execution. Professor Corson put the question to Browning himself, and quotes his answer thus: '"Yes, I meant that the commands were that she should be put to death." And then after a pause he added with a characteristic dash of expression, as if the thought had just started in his mind, "Or he might have had her shut up in a convent."'

56. *Claus of Innsbruck.* An imaginary artist. Innsbruck is in the Tyrol. It is famous for the bronze work on the tomb of the emperor Maximilian.

The teacher should take care that the student masters all the points in this exquisite example of the dramatic monologue, Browning's favorite art form.

COUNT GISMOND

This stirring narrative, in which Browning concentrates the heroic spirit of mediæval chivalry, tells in the very words of the heroine of the incident a straight-forward story which needs no comment; but the reader should not miss the charming equivocation with which the heroine avoids telling her husband that she has been boasting to her friend of his prowess.

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

Ratisbon is in Bavaria, on the right bank of the Danube. It was stormed by Napoleon in 1809, after an obstinate defence by the Austrians. Mrs. Orr says: 'The story is true; but its actual hero was a man.'

788. 1. *we French.* The story is told by a spectator.

7. *prone.* Bending or leaning forward.

11. *Lannes.* One of Napoleon's generals.

789. 29. *flag-bird.* The Napoleonic standard was a tricolor powdered with golden bees, with an eagle on the central stripe.

vans. Wings. Latin *vannus,* a fan for winnowing grain.

34–5. *film* is nominative to *sheathes.*

THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND

Browning was proud to remember that the Italian patriot Mazzini used to read this poem to his fellow exiles in England to show how an Englishman could sympathize with them. (Mrs. Orr.)

8. *Charles.* Charles Albert, Prince of Carignano, belonged to the royal house of Savoy, but was brought up among the people, and as a young man expressed sympathy with revolutionary principles. He was afterward accused of betraying Italy, and was bitterly denounced by his former friends.

19. *Metternich our friend.* Said ironically. Metternich, the Austrian statesman and diplomatist, was the most determined enemy of Italian independence.

20. See note above on Charles Albert.

41. *crypt.* Place of concealment; commonly used of a place for burial.

46. My fears were not for myself, but for my country; 'on me Rested the hopes of Italy.'

35, 75. *duomo.* (Italian) Cathedral.

76. *Tenebræ.* A service of the Roman Catholic Church, which involves the gradual extinction of the lights on the altar. The Latin word literally means 'darkness.'

81. It was not unusual for a priest to render service to the cause of Italian liberty.

790. 125–7. Charles Albert became King of Sardinia in 1831 and resigned the crown to his son, Victor Emmanuel, in 1849. He retired to Portugal, where he died in the same year, 'broken-hearted and misunderstood.' The patriot's wish as expressed by Browning was, therefore, fulfilled four years after the poem was published. Charles Albert's position was a very difficult one, and historians generally take a more favorable view of his conduct than is here given. Browning has merely given characteristic expression to the sentiment of the ardent Italian patriots of the time.

138–44. These lines forcefully represent the division of opinion in Italy during the apparently fruitless struggles for independence.

THE LOST LEADER

The suggestion for this early poem was undoubtedly Wordsworth's abandonment of the Liberal principles of his youth for the reactionary Conservatism of his old age; but it was only a suggestion. 'Once call my fancy portrait Wordsworth,' Browning wrote, 'and how much more ought one to say.' In another letter he speaks of Wordsworth's 'moral and intellectual superiority,' and protests against taking this poem as an attempt to draw his real likeness. It is really a character study from Browning's own imagination, and should be so regarded, in justice to both poets.

791. 29–30. It is best for him to fight for the side he has chosen as well as he can, to fight so well indeed as to threaten us with defeat before the hour of our final triumph. 'Then let him receive,' etc.

HOME THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD

It is interesting to contrast Browning's preference for English birds and flowers, expressed in this poem after his earlier visits to the Continent, with the love of Italy breathed in '*De Gustibus —*' p. 802, which was written after his settlement with his wife in Florence.

HOME THOUGHTS FROM THE SEA

Written off Gibraltar during Browning's first voyage to Italy in 1838.

1–7. *Cape St. Vincent, Cadiz Bay, Trafalgar* are all associated with English victories. *Gibraltar,* the famous rock-fortress which guards the entrance to the Mediterranean, has been held by Great Britain since its capture in 1704. These glorious memories inspire the poet with a sense of his duty to his country, and he mingles prayer for the future with praise for the past. *Say* is imperative. 'Whoso turns, etc. . . . let him say "How can I help England?"'

SAUL

Browning found the suggestion for this, one of his finest religious poems, in the Old Testament narrative of Saul's depression and its relief by the harping of David, the shepherd boy — 1 Samuel xvi, 14–23, which the teacher would do well to read to the class in order to show how the poet has filled with life and color the mere hints of the original. Browning has read into the ancient story not only doctrines and ideas taken from the New Testament, but modern religious views and sentiments.

1. *Abner.* The son of Ner, captain of Saul's host. See 1 Samuel xxvi, 5.

792. 36–41. Professor Albert S. Cook suggests that Browning obtained his hints for these tunes from Longus's romance of *Daphnis and Chloe.* The first is found on pp. 303–4 (Smith's Translation, Bohn ed.), 'He ran through all variations of pastoral melody, he played the tune which the oxen obey, and which attracts the goats — that in which the sheep delight,' etc.; pp. 332–4, '. . . . standing under the shade of a beech-tree, he took his pipe from his scrip and breathed into it very gently. The goats stood still, merely lifting up their heads. Next he played the pasture tune, upon which they all put down their heads and began to graze. Now he produced some notes soft and sweet in tone; at once his herd lay down. After this he piped in a sharp key, and they ran off to the wood, as if a wolf were in sight.' In answer to the question as to whether there is any historical foundation for David's songs, Rabbi Charles Fleischer of Boston replied in a letter to the editors: 'I believe that David's songs in Browning's poem *Saul* are the inspired melodies of our nineteenth century David rather than the songs of Israel's poetic shepherd-king. . . . While, then, I believe that these melodies in *Saul* were not current among the Jews of old, I know that they would serve well to express beliefs and ideals characteristic of the best minds among the Jews of to-day.'— Porter and Clarke.

45. *Jerboa.* The jumping hare.

795. 203. *Hebron* was one of the cities of refuge, but Browning evidently takes it as the name of a mountain.

204. *Kidron.* A brook near Jerusalem.

The first nine stanzas of this poem (to line 96) were published in *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* in 1845; the later stanzas were written after his marriage, and published in *Men and Women* (1855). The latter part shows a marked advance in intensity of religious conviction, probably due to Mrs. Browning's influence. The student should note that David first played on his harp (36–60); then sang (68–190); and finally spoke (237–312). The inner structure of the poem should be carefully studied so as to bring out the gradual rise of theme from external nature to human activities and sympathies, from the glory of kingship to the glory of fame, and so to the culmination of Divine Love as manifested in the Incarnation.

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

This poem was written when Browning was in Rome in the winter of 1853–4, and is said to have been suggested by the contrast between the present desolation of the Campagna and its former magnificence; but the scene is imaginatively treated, and cannot be identified with any place in particular. The living love, even of an obscure boy and girl, counted for more with Browning than all the dead glories of the earth.

A WOMAN'S LAST WORD

The title refers to the old proverb, 'a woman will always have the last word in a quarrel.' This 'woman's last word,' however, is not one of recrimination, but of reconciliation and submission. She will even sacrifice what she believes to be true (st. iv), lest she should lose her domestic peace as Eve lost Paradise.

A TOCCATA OF GALUPPI'S

Baldassare Galuppi (1706–85), a musical composer of some note in his day, who was for the last years of his life organist at St. Mark's Cathedral, Venice, is here taken by Browning as an exponent and critic of the frivolous, empty life with which the name of this Italian city has long been associated. But the toccata speaks to the man who plays it — a student of science — not only of the emptiness of life at Venice in the eighteenth century, but of the emptiness of life in general, for st. xiii is, of course, to be taken ironically; as he thinks of the beauty and gaiety of Venice all turned to 'dust and ashes,' he feels 'chilly and grown old,' for even so all human activities seem to pass away into nothingness.

The *toccata* is marked by the repetition of phrases calculated to display a peculiar facility of touch (It. *toccare*, to touch) on the musician's part.

799. 6. 'The ceremony of wedding the Adriatic was instituted in 1174 by Pope Alexander III, who gave the Doge a gold ring from his own finger in token of the victory achieved by the Venetian fleet at Istria over Frederick Barbarossa, in defense of the Pope's quarrel. When his Holiness gave the ring, he desired the Doge to throw a similar ring into the sea annually, in commemoration of the event.' (Brewer.)

8. *Shylock's bridge.* The Rialto.

18. *clavichord.* An old-fashioned instrument, with keys and strings, the predecessor of the modern pianoforte.

The musical technicalities made use of are thus elucidated by Porter and Clarke, *Poems of Robert Browning:* — 'The technical musical allusions in the poem are all to be found in the 7th, 8th, and 9th stanzas. The *lesser thirds* (line 19) are minor thirds (intervals containing three semitones), and are of common occurrence, but the diminished sixth is an interval rarely used. Ordinarily a *diminished sixth* (seven semitones), exactly the same interval as a perfect fifth, instead of giving a plaintive, mournful, or minor impression, would suggest a feeling of rest and satisfaction. There is one way, however, in which it can be used — as a suspension, in which the root of the chord on the *lowered* supertonic of the scale is suspended from above into the chord with added seventh on the super-tonic, making a diminished sixth between the root of the first and third of the second chord. The effect of this progression is most dismal, and possibly Browning had it in mind. *Suspensions* (line 20) are notes which are held over from one chord into another, and must be made according to certain strict musical rules. This holding over of a note always produces a dissonance, and must be followed by a concord — in other words, a *solution.* Sevenths are very important dissonances in music, and a *commiserating seventh* (line 21) is most likely the variety called a minor seventh. Being a somewhat less mournful interval than the lesser thirds and the diminished sixths, whether real or imaginary, yet not so final as "those solutions" which seem to put an end to all uncertainty, and therefore to life, they arouse in the listeners to Galuppi's playing a hope that life may last, although in a sort of dissonantal, Wagnerian fashion. The "commiserating sevenths" are closely connected with the "dominant's persistence" (line 24). The dominant chord in music is the chord written on the fifth degree of the scale, and it almost always has a seventh added to it, and in a large percentage of cases is followed by the tonic, the chord on the first degree of the scale. Now, in fugue form a theme is first presented in the tonic key, then the same theme is repeated in the dominant key, the latter being called the answer; after some development of the theme the fugue comes to what is called an episode, after which the theme is presented first, in the dominant. "Hark! the dominant's persistence" alludes to this musical fact; but according to rule this dominant must be answered in the tonic an octave above the first presentation of the theme, and "So an octave struck the answer." Thus the inexorable solution comes in after the dominant's persistence. Although life seemed possible with commiserating sevenths, the tonic, a resistless fate, strikes the answer that all must end.'

MY STAR

This poem has been interpreted as having personal reference to Mrs. Browning; but there is no reason to set it apart from the other poems described by Browning as 'always dramatic in principle, and so many utterances of so many imaginary persons.'

800. 4. *angled spar.* 'A prism of Iceland spar has the property of polarizing or dividing a ray of light into two parts. Suppose this polarized ray be passed through a plate of Iceland spar, at a certain angle, and a second prism of Iceland spar be rotated in front of it, different colors will be given out, complementary tints being ninety degrees apart, and four times during the rotation the light will vanish completely. Some such experiment as this was probably in the poet's mind when he made the comparison with the angled spar.' (Porter and Clarke.)

THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER

The utter devotion of this poem is, in Browning's view, characteristic of true love.

801. 62. *Ten lines.* Of history or biography.

65. *the Abbey.* Westminster Abbey, where England's heroes are commemorated.

67–88. Cf. *In a Balcony,* 664–7: —

> 'We live, and they experiment on life —
> Those poets, painters, all who stand aloof
> To overlook the farther. Let us be
> The thing they look at!'

MEMORABILIA

'Things worth remembering.' This poem is said to have been suggested to Browning by overhearing a man say in a shop that he had met and spoken to Shelley. By the metaphor of the eagle's feather, Browning conveys to the reader that if such a piece of good fortune had happened to him, it would have been enough to blot out all other incidents.

'DE GUSTIBUS'

The Latin proverb 'De gustibus non est disputandum,' corresponds to the English one 'There's no accounting for tastes.' Browning says that if our preferences persist after death, his will be, not for England, but for Italy.

802. 22. *cicala,* the tree-cricket, often heard in Italy in the heat of summer.

36. *liver-wing,* right arm. The Bourbon rule in Southern Italy was exceedingly unpopular, and numerous attempts were made to cast it off; the king here referred to was Ferdinand II, whose cruelties were denounced by Gladstone in 1851. He was succeeded by his son, who was expelled in 1860, and Naples was incorporated with the new kingdom of Italy. Browning sympathized with all the Italians' attempts to regain their liberty and independence, even when they went the length of assassination.

ANDREA DEL SARTO

This is one of the most remarkable of Browning's shorter poems, whether regarded as a study of character or of art. It was written when he was living in Florence, in answer to a request from a friend in England for a copy of the portrait of Andrea del Sarto and his wife in the Pitti Palace. Browning could not get one, and sent the poem instead. Mr. Ernest Radford thus describes the picture: —'The artist and his wife are presented at half length. Andrea turns towards her with a pleading expression on his face. . . . His right arm is round her; he leans forward as if searching her face for the strength that has gone from himself. . . . She holds the letter in her hand, and looks neither at that nor at him, but straight out of the canvas. And the beautiful face with the red-brown hair is passive and unruffled, and awfully expressionless. There is silent thunder in this face if there ever was, but there is no anger. It suggests only a very mild, and at the same time immutable determination to have her own way.'

Browning develops, in his favorite form of the dramatic monologue, the suggestion given by Andrea's portrait of himself; for the details he is chiefly indebted to Vasari's *Life of Andrea del Sarto,* as will be seen from the following extracts (translation by Blashfield and Hopkins, with Mrs. Foster's notes): —'Had this master possessed a somewhat bolder and more elevated mind, had he been as much distinguished for higher qualifications as he was for genius and depth of judgment in the art he practised, he would, beyond all doubt, have been without an equal. But there was a certain timidity of mind, a sort of diffidence and want of force in his nature, which rendered it impossible that those evidences of ardor and animation, which are proper to the more exalted character, should ever appear in him; nor did he at any time display one particle of that elevation which, could it but have been added to the advantages wherewith he was endowed, would have rendered him a truly divine painter. . . . At that time there was a most beautiful girl in the Via di San Gallo, who was married to a cap-maker, and who, though born of a poor and vicious father, carried about her as much pride and haughtiness as beauty and fascination. She delighted in trapping the hearts of men, and among others ensnared the unlucky Andrea, whose immoderate love for her soon caused him to neglect the studies demanded by his art, and in great measure to discontinue the assistance which he had given his parents. Now it chanced that a sudden and grievous illness seized the husband of this woman, who rose no more from his bed, but died thereof. Without taking counsel of his friends therefore; without regard to the dignity of his art or the consideration due to his genius, and to the eminence he had attained with so much labor; without a word, in short, to any of his kindred, Andrea took this Lucrezia di Baccio del Fede, such was the name of the woman, to be his wife; her beauty appearing to him to merit thus much at his hands, and his love for her having more influence over him than the glory and honor towards which he had begun to make such hopeful advances. But when this news became known in Florence the respect and affection which his friends had previously borne to Andrea changed to contempt and disgust, since it appeared to them that the darkness of this disgrace had obscured for a time all the glory and renown obtained by his talents. But he destroyed his own peace as well as estranged his friends by this act, seeing that he soon became jealous, and found that he had besides fallen into the hands of an artful woman, who made him do as she pleased in all things. He abandoned his own poor father and mother, for example, and adopted the father and sisters of his wife in their stead; insomuch that all who knew the facts mourned over him, and he soon began to be as much avoided as he had previously been sought after.' Andrea found this mode of life so oppressive that, on the advice of his friends, he put his wife in safe keeping and went to Paris, where he was richly rewarded by the King of France for his work. But a pitiful letter from his wife induced him to return. 'Taking the money which the king confided to him for the purchase

of pictures, statues and other fine things, he set off, therefore, having first sworn on the gospels to return in a few months. Arrived happily in Florence, he lived joyously with his wife for some time, making large presents to her father and sisters, but doing nothing for his own parents, whom he would not even see, and who, at the end of a certain period, ended their lives in great poverty and misery.' Having spent the money entrusted to him in building a house and indulging himself in various other pleasures, Andrea was afraid to return to France, and remained in Florence in the very lowest position, 'procuring a livelihood and passing his time as he best might.'

So says Vasari, who at one time was Andrea's pupil, and published his *Lives of the Painters* while Andrea's widow was still in Florence; but recent investigation has failed to reveal the slightest evidence in support of the charge of embezzlement made by Vasari against Andrea, and it has been generaly discredited.

803. 15. *Fiesolé.* The village on the top of the ridge overlooking the quarter of Florence in which Andrea lived.

25. *It saves a model.* 'Andrea rarely painted the countenance of a woman in any place that he did not avail himself of the features of his wife; and if at any time he took his model from any other face there was always a resemblance to hers in the painting, not only because he had this woman constantly before him and depicted her so frequently but also and what is still more, because he had her lineaments engraven on his heart; it thus happens that almost all his female heads have a certain something which recalls that of his wife.' (Vasari.)

32. *no one's.* Not even his.

36–45. Lucrezia has lost only her first pride in her husband; he has lost all his youthful ambitions and aspirations, as the day loses its noontide splendor, and the glory of summer changes to the decay of autumn.

43. *huddled more inside.* The trees are huddled together within the convent wall, and have no room to grow; but they are, perhaps, safer — so, perhaps, too, is the painter in his own home, though he misses the inspiration and development that come from contact with the world. Andrea acquiesces in his seclusion, but he cannot help regretting his lost opportunities.

93. *Morello.* A mountain near Florence.

804. 105. *the Urbinate.* Raphael of Urbino, the most famous of Italian painters; he died in 1520, ten years before Andrea. Vasari says that Andrea copied a portrait by Raphael with such exactness that Raphael's own pupils, who had helped in the painting, could not tell the copy from the original.

130. *Agnolo.* The great Italian painter usually called Michael Angelo in English; he was doubtless the 'Someone' of line 76; Andrea refers to him again in line 184.

150. *Fontainebleau.* A royal palace not far from Paris.

166. See quotation from Vasari above for Andrea's recall from France by his wife's importunities.

173. *there.* In your heart.

174. *ere the triumph.* Of my genius in art.

805. 189–193. Bocchi, in his *Beauties of Florence*, states that Michael Angelo said to Raphael, referring to Andrea: —'There is a little man in Florence, who, if he were employed upon such great works as have been given to you, would bring the sweat to your brow.'

199. Lucrezia has interrupted to ask Andrea about whom and what he is talking. She is evidently paying no attention.

209–10. Mount Morello can no longer be seen, the lights on the city wall are lit, and the little owls, named in Italy from their call, *Chiu*, are crying; darkness is falling on the house, as on Andrea's life.

212–18. See above for the charge against Andrea of building a house for himself with the money entrusted to him by King Francis to buy pictures with.

220. The cousin (or lover) who waits outside is the third character in the little drama — silent and unseen, but profoundly affecting the situation.

806. 263. *Leonard.* Leonardo da Vinci, the third great Italian painter of the time; he died the year before Raphael.

266. Andrea at last acknowledges to himself that his wife has been a hindrance instead of a help, a drag preventing his ascent from the second rank to the first: but he prefers this to the sacrifice of giving her up.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL

In the Church of St. Augustine at Fano, on the Adriatic, there is a picture called 'The Guardian Angel,' by Guercino, an Italian painter of the seventeenth century. It represents an angel with outspread wings embracing a kneeling child, whose hands he folds in prayer.

6. *another child.* The poet himself.

7. *retrieve.* Bring back to the right way.

14–16. In the picture cherubs point to the opened heaven, and the child looks upward past the angel's head.

18. *bird of God.* This beautiful expression is translated from Dante's *Purgatorio.*

20–21. The angel seems to be enfolding the child with the skirt of his robe, held in his left hand.

39–40. The angel's head is turned away, but the reason given is Browning's own.

46. *My angel with me, too.* His wife. See line 54.

807. 54. *dear old friend.* Alfred Domett, a much-prized friend of Browning's youth, who in 1842 settled in New Zealand.

56. *Ancona.* On the Italian coast, near Fano. Browning and his wife visited both places soon after their first settlement in Italy in 1846, and the poem was doubtless written at the time. Mrs. Browning writes of the visit to her friend, Miss Mitford: —'So we went to Ancona — a striking sea city, holding up against the brown rocks, and elbowing out the purple tides — beautiful to look upon. An exfoliation of the rock itself you would call the houses that seem to grow there — so identical is the color and character.'

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL

This poem 'exhibits something of the life of the Scaligers and the Casaubons, of many an early scholar, like Roger Bacon's friend Pierre Maricourt, working at some region of knowledge, and content to labor without fame so long as he mastered thoroughly whatever he undertook.' (*Contemporary Review,* IV, 135.)

The scholars are bearing their master to his tomb in one of the Italian hill-cities, perched on the top of the rocks, like Orvieto or Perugia.

3. *croft.* Enclosed tilled or pasture land. *thorpe.* Little village.

34. *Apollo.* The classical ideal of manly beauty. His statues usually represent him holding the lyre.

39. *Moaned he.* Did he moan?

45. *the world.* Of classical lore, which was bent on escaping.

56. *the curtain.* Of the play of life.

68. *Sooner.* Before he had gathered all books had to give.

808. 86. *Calculus.* The stone.

88. *Tussis.* Cough.

95. *soul-hydroptic.* 'Every lust is a kind of hydropic distemper, and the more we drink the more we shall thirst.' (Tillotson, quoted by Webster.) *hydroptic,* dropsical.

96–100. Cf. *Abt Vogler,* l. 72, p. 812.

113–124. Cf. *Rabbi ben Ezra,* stanzas xxiii-xxv, p. 815.

129–131. *Hoti, . . . Oun, . . . De.* Greek particles, meaning respectively 'that,' 'therefore,' 'towards.' As to the last, Browning wrote to the editor of the *London Daily News* on Nov. 20, 1874, as follows: —'In a clever article you speak of "the doctrine of the enclitic *De*"—"which with all deference to Mr. Browning, in point of fact, does not exist." No, not to Mr. Browning: but pray defer to Herr Buttmann, whose fifth list of "enclitics" ends "with the inseparable *De*"— or to Curtius, whose fifth list ends also with "*De* (meaning '*towards,* and as a demonstrative appendage)." That this is not to be confounded with the accentuated "*De,* meaning but," was the "Doctrine" which the Grammarian bequeathed to those capable of receiving it.'

ONE WORD MORE

A special interest attaches to this poem because it is the only one addressed by Browning, directly and avowedly, to his wife, Elizabeth Barrett Browning. It was originally appended to the collection of poems, called *Men and Women* (1855). Browning uses the sonnets written by Raphael and a portrait painted by Dante to illustrate the desire of the artist to show his personal affection in some other way than that of his familiar craft, which has become professional and belongs to the world, so that everybody feels entitled to criticize. But as the poet cannot paint pictures, or carve statues, or make music to show his love, a semblance of resource remains in the use of a slightly different form of art from that which he commonly practises. Instead of writing dramatically, he may write, for once in his own person; for just as, according to the ancient myth, the moon would turn to her lover a side unseen by other mortals, so the poet has two soul-sides, 'one to face the world with, One to show a woman when he loves her.' While he says this of himself, he likes to think it of her, his 'moon of poets.' Her poetry is the world's side, and he too admires her from that point of view; but the best is when he leaves the standpoint of literary appreciation for the more intimate relation of personal knowledge and affection. Then it is that he realizes the love that Raphael sought to express by his sonnets and Dante by his picture.

5. *a century of sonnets.* Guido Reni had a book of 100 drawings of Raphael's, but Raphael is only known to have made four sonnets. Raphael never married, but he was very much in love with a certain lady, who has been identified, not very convincingly, with the original of one or other of the portraits attributed to his hand.

809. 22–24. The Sistine Madonna is now in the Dresden Art Gallery, the Madonna di Foligno is in the Vatican at Rome. 'The Madonna at Florence is that called del Granduca, which represents her as "appearing to a votary in a vision"— so say the describers; it is in the earlier manner, and very beautiful. I think I meant La Belle Jardinière — but am not sure — for the picture in the Louvre.' (Browning to W. J. Rolfe.) The Louvre Madonna is seated in the midst of a garden, in which there are lilies. All these are among the most famous works of Raphael.

27. *Guido Reni.* A celebrated Italian painter about a century later than Raphael. See note on line 5.

32. *Dante.* The first great Italian poet (1265–1321), who in *The Divine Comedy* attached eternal opprobrium to his enemies by assigning to them conspicuous places in Hell. Stanzas v, vi, and vii refer to a passage in his *Vita Nuova,* in which he has idealized his love for Beatrice, whom he had known as a young girl: —'On that day which fulfilled the year since my lady had been made of the citizens of eternal life; remembering me of her as I sat alone, I betook myself to draw the resemblance of an angel upon certain tablets. And while I did thus, chancing to turn my head, I perceived that some were standing beside me to whom I should have given courteous welcome, and that they were observing what I did: also I learned afterwards that they had been there a while before I perceived them. Perceiving whom, I rose for salutation and said: "Another was with me." Afterwards, when they had left me, I set myself again to the same occupation, to wit, to the drawing figures of angels.' (Section 35, Rossetti's translation.) It will be noticed that Browning's interpretation of the incident goes somewhat beyond the original, which gives no indication that those who interrupted Dante were people he scarified in the *Inferno.*

33. *Beatrice.* Four syllables — *bā ah trē' tshe.*

57. *Bice.* Two syllables — *bē' tshe.* A contraction of endearment of Beatrice.

74–93. There are two accounts in the Pentateuch of the smiting of the rock by Moses.— Exodus xvii, 1–7, and Numbers xx, 2–11. The latter reads:

'And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? . . . And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.' Here, again, Browning has allowed his imagination to play round the original record.

810. 94–5. When the children of Israel were rebellious against Moses, they cried, 'Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots' (Exodus xvi, 3).

97. Exodus xxxiv, 29–35. *cloven,* because, following the Latin translation of this passage, the early painters represented Moses with two horns on his forehead. The original means to shine out or dart forth like rays of light.

101–2. Moses married Zipporah, Jethro's daughter (Exodus ii, 16–21), and an Ethiopian woman (Numbers xii, 1).

121. *fresco.* Painting in fresh plaster, usually done on the inside wall of a church.

125. *missal-marge.* The margin of a prayer book.

136–8. *Karshish, Cleon, Norbert, Lippo, Roland* and *Andrea* were among the characters in *Men and Women,* originally fifty in number.

143. *how I speak.* The personal instead of the dramatic mode of expression.

145. *Here in London.* The poem was written in London in September, 1855.

150. *Samminiato.* The common pronunciation of San Miniato, an old church, surrounded by cypress trees, overlooking Florence.

160. *mythos.* The old myth or story of the love of Diana, the moon-goddess, for the mortal Endymion.

163. *Zoroaster* (589–513 B. C.), founder of the Persian religion and a famous astronomer.

164. *Galile'o* (1564–1642). Professor at Padua, and one of the founders of modern science. After being condemned by the church, he continued his studies in his house at Florence, which overlooks the city from the same side as San Miniato.

165. *Homer.* In allusion to the *Hymn to the Moon.*

Keats. The author of *Endymion.* Browning expressed special admiration for him in the poem entitled *Popularity.*

811. 172–9. Exodus xxiv, 9–11: 'Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness . . . also they saw God, and did eat and drink.'

ABT VOGLER

George Joseph Vogler (1749–1814), the priest-musician, composer, and teacher of Weber and Meyerbeer, was especially celebrated as an improviser, and traveled all over Europe giving performances on his orchestrion.

7. *Name,* Jehovah, used by Solomon as a talisman, according to oriental tradition.

22. *festal night.* Easter at St. Peter's, Rome.

812. 32. *no more near nor far.* 'Music frees us from the phenomena of time and space.'

34. *Protoplast.* 'The thing first formed as a model to be imitated.' The *presences* are either of the future or of the past.

70. *The evil is null.* The teaching of Spinoza, Hegel, and Emerson, as well as of the Kabbalists, founded on that of the Gnostics and Neo-Platonists.

813. 91. *the common chord* 'consists of the fundamental, with a major (four semitones), or minor (three semitones) third, and a perfect fifth (seven semitones) over it.'

93. *a ninth* 'if major, contains an octave and two semitones; if minor, an octave and one semitone. These last lines of the poem, stripped of their symbolic meaning, may be taken as an exact explanation of a simple harmonic modulation.' (Porter and Clarke.)

RABBI BEN EZRA

Ibn Ezra, or Abenezra (1092–1167), was a great Jewish scholar, poet, philosopher, and physician, who wandered over Europe, Asia, and Africa in pursuit of knowledge. As will be seen from the notes, his writings contain some of the views expressed by Browning's sage.

1. The Rabbi seems to be at the end of middle age, just where old age begins. He looks back to youth, forward to old age.

4. A poem of Abenezra's, quoted by Dr. Michael Sachs, has the same thought: 'In deiner Hand liegt mein Geschick.'

Stanzas ii and iii should be taken together. The sense is: 'I do not remonstrate because youth, amassing flowers, sighed . . .' He does not find fault with the foolish ambitions of his youth, for these aspirations, though they are vain, are what distinguish man from the beasts. This thought is expressed by Abenezra in his Commentary on Job xxxv, 11: 'Man has the sole privilege of becoming superior to the beast and the fowl.'

25–30. Stanza v expresses a favorite thought of Browning's. Cf. *A Death in the Desert,* 576–8: —

> Progress, man's distinctive mark alone,
> Not God's and not the beasts': God is, they are,
> Man partly is and wholly hopes to be.

40–42. Cf. *Saul,* lines 160 and 295.

814. 48. *soul on its lone way.* 'The soul of man is called lonely because it is separated during its union with the body from the universal soul.' (Abenezra's Commentary on Psalm xxii, 22.)

57. Cf. *Saul,* line 242.

815. 151. *Potter's wheel.* Cf. Isaiah lxiv, 8: 'We are the clay and thou our Potter.' This is a favorite scriptural and oriental metaphor, used also by Quarles and in Fitzgerald's translation of the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam, but by no previous poet with such deep significance as here.

PROSPICE

'Look forward.' This noble defiance of death was written in the autumn after Browning lost his wife, and appeared first in the *Atlantic Monthly* for June, 1864.

816. 19. *life's arrears.* All the pain that a man might fairly have expected to suffer in life, but missed.

23. *fiend-voices.* The ancient belief was that the soul at the moment of separation from the body is the object of a struggle between the angels, whose office is to bear away the freed spirit (Luke xvi, 22) and the powers of darkness who strive to snatch it from salvation. For this reason fervent prayers are offered for a soul on the point of departure.

27–28. Browning had a strong faith in immortality, and repeatedly expressed it in both prose and verse. He said: 'I know I shall meet my dearest friends again.'

HERVÉ RIEL

Browning was in France when it was invaded by Prussia in 1870, and escaped from the country with some difficulty before the outbreak of the disorders which followed the collapse of the French resistance. Desiring to express his sympathy for the sufferers by the siege of Paris, he sold this poem to *Cornhill Magazine* for £100, which he gave as a subscription to the Relief Fund. It was written in 1867 and first published in 1871. The incident it relates was first denied in France, but the records of the admiralty of the time proved that Browning was correct, except in one small detail: the reward Hervé Riel asked and received was '*un congé absolu*'— a holiday for the rest of his life.

1. *the Hogue.* Cap La Hogue, where the French fleet was attacked in 1692 by the English and Dutch, and forced to retire. The expedition aimed at the restoration of James II, who watched the defeat from the Norman coast.

5. *St. Malo,* at the mouth of the Rance River, in Brittany, has a harbor which is described as 'safe, but difficult of approach.' In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was a flourishing port, and from it Jacques Cartier sailed in 1535 to explore the River St. Lawrence. *the Rance.* A small stream with picturesque steep banks. The town is situated on a rock between the harbor and the mouth of the river.

18. *twelve and eighty.* French, quatre-vingt-douze.

817. 30. *Plymouth Sound.* In the West of England, an important harbor and naval station.

43. *pressed.* Forced to serve.

Tourville. The French admiral.

44. *Croisickese.* Of Croisic, a little fishing village of Brittany, where Browning liked to stay. See the title of the next poem in this selection. It was no doubt at Croisic that Browning picked up the story.

46. *Malouins.* Men of St. Malo.

49. *Grève.* La Grande Grève, the sandy shallows of the coast about St. Malo, especially to the east.

53. *Solidor.* A small harbor near the mouth of the Rance, beside the town of St. Servan. A fort of the same name defends it.

75. *profound* (here used as a noun). Depths.

92. *rampired.* Protected by ramparts or fortifications.

95. *for.* Instead of.

818. 135. *the Louvre.* A famous palace at Paris, now used as an art museum. On its external walls there are eighty-six statues of notable Frenchmen, but not, of course, one of the forgotten hero, Hervé Riel.

THE TWO POETS OF CROISIC

The Prologue and the Epilogue are connected with the main poem (which is here omitted) only by the thought, common to all three, that love is a necessary part of the poet's life and art. The Prologue may cause a little difficulty to begin with by its extraordinary conciseness, but this only adds to its charm when the meaning has been grasped. The grammatical construction and the relation of the stanzas to each other are indicated in the following prose rendering: 'As a bank of moss stands bare till some May morning it is made beautiful by the sudden growth of the violets; as the night sky is dark and louring till a bright star pierces the concealing clouds; so the world seemed to hem in my life with disgrace till you face appeared to brighten it with the smile of God — the divine gift of love.'

In the Epilogue it is a young girl who repeats to the poet the 'pretty tale' he has once told her and makes her own application of its significance. The story is found in Greek literature both in prose and in verse.

819. 50. Here, as in lines 15 and 21, the poet has attempted to interrupt.

77. *Lotte.* The pet name of Charlotte Buff, upon whom Goethe modelled the heroine of *The Sorrows of Young Werther.* The reference here, however, is rather to Goethe's way of treating women in general than to the particular case of Lotte, for she was already engaged to be married when he met her.

100–2. The sweet lilt of the treble was supplied by the chirping of the cricket, when its absence would have allowed the predominance of the sombre bass. Cf. lines 112–4.

120. (*There, enough!*) To what interruption of the poet's does this reply?

PHEIDIPPIDES

This is Browning's romantic setting of an incident of the Persian war which is thus recounted by the Greek historian Herodotus (VI, 105. Rawlinson's translation): —

'And first, before they left Athens, the generals sent off to Sparta a herald, one Pheidip'pides, who was by birth an Athenian, and by birth and practice a trained runner. This man, according to the account which he gave to the Athenians on his return, when he was near Mount Parthenium above Tegea, fell in with the god Pan, who called him by his name, and bade him ask the Athenians 'wherefore they neglected him so entirely, when he was kindly disposed towards them, and had often helped them in times past, and would do so again in time to come?' The Athenians, entirely believ

ing in the truth of this report, as soon as their affairs were once more in good order, set up a temple to Pan under the Acropolis, and, in return for the message which I have recorded, established in his honor yearly sacrifices and a torch-race.

'On the occasion of which we speak, when Pheidippides was sent by the Athenian generals, and, according to his own account saw Pan on his journey, he reached Sparta on the very next day after quitting the city of Athens. Upon his arrival he went before the rulers, and said to them: —

'"Men of Lacedæmon, the Athenians beseech you to hasten to their aid, and not allow that state, which is the most ancient in all Greece, to be enslaved by the barbarians. Eretria, look you, is already carried away captive, and Greece weakened by the loss of no mean city."

'Thus did Pheidippides deliver the message committed to him. And the Spartans wished to help the Athenians, but were unable to give them any present succor, as they did not like to break their established law. It was the ninth day of the first decade, and they could not march out of Sparta on the ninth, when the moon had not reached the full. So they waited for the full of the moon.'

It will be seen that the original story makes no mention of a reward promised by Pan to Pheidippides. This was Browning's own invention, following a later tradition. In connection with the Marathon race at the Olympic games this was the subject of a considerable discussion, to which Professor Ernest A. Gardner contributed the following note as to Pheidippides: 'His great exploit, as recorded by Herodotus, was to run from Athens to Sparta within two days, for the practical purpose of summoning the Spartans to help against the Persian invader. The whole Athenian army made a forced march back to Athens immediately after the battle, also for a practical purpose; but there is no reason to suppose that Pheidippides or any one else ran the distance. The tale of his bearing the message of victory and falling dead when he arrived is probably an invention of some later rhetorician; it is referred to by Lucian, as well as by Robert Browning, but the two authorities are about of equal value for an occurrence of the fifth century B. C. It is most unlikely that Herodotus would have omitted such a story if it had been current in his time.'

χαίρετε, νικῶμεν, the Greek words prefixed by Browning to the poem, form the message which Plutarch and Lucian attribute to the dying runner after Marathon. Browning translates them 'Rejoice; we conquer!' and in lines 113–114 makes effective use of the fact that *χαίρετε* ('Hail!' or 'be of good cheer!') was also the customary form of salutation with the Greeks. Here again he was indebted to a suggestion derived from Lucian.

820. 4. *Her of the ægis and spear.* Athene. *ægis*, shield.

5. *ye of the bow and the buskin.* Apollo and Artemis. *buskin*, laced boot.

9. *Archons.* Rulers or magistrates. *tettix.* The golden grasshopper worn by Athenians to show that they were autochthons (natives of the country).

11. *Crowned with the myrtle.* This still refers to *Archons.* Browning is strictly accurate in these points of detail.

18. *water and earth.* The emblems of subjection. This demand was made in 493 B. C. The invading Persians were defeated at Marathon three years later.

19. *Eretria.* The chief city of the island of Eubœa, a little north of Athens.

20. *Hellas.* Greek civilization regarded as a whole.

25–40. Herodotus, as quoted above, says: 'So they waited for the full of the moon.' Grote ascribes the delay of the Spartans to conservatism, Rawlinson to envy; there was long-standing jealousy between Athens and Sparta, who were rivals for the leadership of Hellas. Sparta later sent 2,000 men, who arrived after the battle.

32–33. *Phoibos. Olumpos.* Browning preferred to retain the Greek spelling instead of the Latinized forms 'Phœbus' and 'Olympus.'

47. *filleted.* Adorned for sacrifice with wreaths and ribbons.

821. 52. *Parnes.* In North Attica. But according to Herodotus as quoted above, Pan appeared to Pheidippides near Mount Parthenium in Argolis. This would be on his way from Athens to Sparta: Parnes would not. Professor John Macnaughton suggests that Browning made the change deliberately. 'He must have an Attic hill at all costs, when what he wants to say is that it is the spirit of her own mountains, her own autochthonous vigor, which is going to save Athens. He consciously sacrifices, in a small and obvious point, literal accuracy to the larger truth.' (*Queen's Quarterly*, April, 1903.)

62. *Erebos.* The darkness under the earth — Erebus.

72–80. After Marathon, the Athenians built a temple to Pan and established yearly sacrifices and a torch-race in acknowledgment of the help the god had given them in the battle by affecting the Persians with 'panic' — the headlong fear Pan was supposed to inspire.

83. *Fennel.* Marathon, the name of the place where the battle was fought, is also Greek for fennel. This touch is Browning's own.

87. *on the razor's edge.* In a critical position — a proverbial phrase in Greek.

89. *Miltiades.* The leading Athenian citizen of the time and commander of the forces at Marathon.

822. 106. *Akropolis.* The citadel of Athens.

109. *the Fennel-field.* Marathon. See note on line 83.

Pheidippides is in a measure of Browning's own, composed of dactyls and spondees, each line ending in a half foot or pause. It gives the impression of firm, continuous, and rhythmic emotion, and is generally fitted to convey the exalted sentiment and heroic character of the poem. (Mrs. Orr.)

The metrical scheme should be carefully analysed. Dr. D. G. Brunton uses this poem as an illustration of Browning's employment of rime 'merely as a means of heightening his secondary rhythm. The riming words are so far apart that we are aware

only ot a faint melodious echo. The always artificial and somewhat mechanical effect of rime is thus avoided, while its rhythmic essence is retained.'

EPILOGUE TO ASOLANDO

We have given at the foot of each poem the date of its publication, and the volume to which this little poem is the Epilogue bears the date 1890; it was actually issued in London on Dec. 12, 1889, the day of Browning's death at Venice. 'The report of his illness had quickened public interest in the forthcoming work, and his son had the satisfaction of telling him of its already realized success, while he could still receive a warm, if momentary pleasure from the intelligence.' (Mrs. Orr.) Browning prepared the volume for publication while staying in the Asolo villa of his friend Mrs. Arthur Bronson, to whom it is dedicated. The fanciful title is derived from the Italian verb *asolare* —'to disport in the open air, amuse one's self at random' — popularly ascribed, Browning tells us, to Cardinal Bembo, who was Queen Cornaro's secretary, and in his dialogue, *Gli Asolani*, described the discussions on platonic love and kindred subjects the little court at Asolo used to indulge in. To Mrs. Bronson Browning justified the title in the following sentence: 'I use it for love of the place and in requital of your pleasant assurance that an early poem of mine first attracted you thither.' This was, no doubt, *Pippa Passes*.

The Epilogue is a final expression of Browning's profound belief in a future life of hopeful activity. When reading the poem in proof, he said of the third stanza: —'It almost looks like bragging to say this, and as if I ought to cancel it, but it 's the simple truth; and as it 's true, it shall stand.'

As in life he had faith in right, so in death — which only fools think of as a prison of the soul — he would be, not pitied, but encouraged by the good wishes of those who are working in the world.

17. *the unseen.* The poet himself after death.

ARNOLD: THE STUDY OF POETRY

This essay was published as the *Introduction* to *The English Poets*, edited by T. H. Ward, London, 1880.

823. *b.* 1. *these words of my own*, quoted — not quite exactly — from Arnold's introduction to *The Hundred Greatest Men*, Vol. I, London, 1879.

5. *In the present work*, in *The English Poets*, edited by Ward.

824. *a.* 11, 15. *Wordsworth . . . Again Wordsworth.* These two quotations are taken from the *Preface* to the Second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, 1800.

38. *Sainte-Beuve*, Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve (1804–1869), an eminent French critic.

825. *a.* 48. *Pellisson*, Paul Pellisson (1624–1693), a French man of letters and politician.

56. *Charles d' Héricault* (born 1823), French historian, novelist, and editor.

57. *Clément Marot*, a noted French poet (1497–1544).

826. *a.* 13. *Methuselah*, see Genesis v, 25–27.

b. 8. *the Imitation, The Imitation of Christ*, a religious treatise commonly ascribed to Thomas a Kempis (1380–1471). The passage quoted is found in Bk. iii, Ch. 43, § 2.

28. *Cædmon*, an Anglo-Saxon poet who is said to have flourished about the year 670. The Biblical paraphrases long ascribed to Cædmon are now regarded as of uncertain authorship.

33. *M. Vitet*, a French critic and politician (1802–1873).

35. *Chanson de Roland*, the oldest French national epic, written, probably, during the closing years of the 11th century.

37. *joculator or jongleur*, well enough understood by our English word *minstrel*.

39. *Hastings*, battle of Hastings, in 1066

43. *Roncevaux*, a pass in the Pyrenees, in Spain, notable as the scene of the events recounted in the *Chanson de Roland*.

44. *Turoldus or Théroulde.* The last line of the *Chanson* in the Oxford manuscript may be translated, 'Here ends the geste that *Turoldus* tells.' *Turoldus* may be the name of the minstrel who sang or recited the poem rather than that of the poet who composed it.

827. *b.* 27. *Dante*, Dante Alighieri (1265–1321), the greatest of Italian poets. His great work, *The Divine Comedy*, consisted of three parts: *Hell*, *Purgatory*, and *Paradise*. *Ugolino*, Ugolino della Gherardesca (d. 1289), a partisan leader in Pisa. With his two sons and two nephews he was starved to death in prison.

32. *Beatrice to Virgil.* According to *The Divine Comedy*, Virgil guided Dante through Hell and Purgatory. In Paradise, Beatrice became Dante's guide.

44. *Henry the Fourth's expostulation, 2 Henry IV*, Act iii, Scene 1.

828. *a.* 6. *Hamlet's dying request.* In the closing scene of the play.

14. *that Miltonic passage, Paradise Lost*, I, 599–602.

17. *intrenched*, cut, furrowed.

21. *two such lines, Paradise Lost*, I, 108–9.

27. *exquisite close, Paradise Lost*, IV, 271–2.

829. *a.* 53. *Southey*, Robert Southey (1774–1843), an English poet and prose-writer.

b. 7. *Brunetto Latini* (1230–1294), an Italian poet, scholar, and orator. His chief work is an encyclopedia, *Trésor* (Treasure), in French.

13. *Christian of Troyes.* The passage here quoted is from *Cliges*, lines 30–39.

48. *that stanza.* To which of the Chaucerian stanzas Arnold refers we cannot be certain. In the matter of stanza forms Chaucer borrowed much from France, and practically nothing at all from Italy.

54. *Wolfram of Eschenbach*, a German poet (ff. c. 1200).

830. *a.* 30. *Dryden's.* Quoted from the *Preface to the Fables.* See edition of Scott and Saintsbury, Vol. XI, p. 230.

49. *Gower*, John Gower (1325?–1408), an English poet.

b. 40. *worship,* honor.

41. *O Alma,* the beginning of a hymn to the Virgin.

831. *b.* 12. *Villon,* François Villon (1431–1484?), a French poet of irregular life.

832. *a.* 20. *Cowley,* Abraham Cowley (1618–1667), an English poet. See p. 183.

21–8. *Dryden . . . there . . . perfect.* See *Preface to the Fables,* edition of Scott and Saintsbury, Vol. XI, p. 224.

b. 10. *Chapman,* George Chapman 1559?–1634), an English poet and dramatist, best known for his translation of Homer.

14. *Gades,* a Phenician colony on the spot where Cadiz now stands, on the western coast of Spain. *Aurora,* the dawn, the East.

15. *Ganges,* the sacred river of India.

21. *Milton writing.* See Milton's *An Apology for Smectymnuus,* Prose Works (ed. Bohn), Vol. III, pp. 117–118.

29. *Dryden telling us.* See the *Postscript to the Reader* appended to Dryden's translation of the *Æneid.*

41. *Restoration,* the reëstablishment of the English monarchy with the return of Charles II in 1660.

833. *a.* 30–31. *A milk-white Hind . . . ranged,* the opening lines of *The Hind and the Panther.*

40–44. *To Hounslow Heath . . . my own, Second Satire,* lines 143–4.

b. 23. *Gray.* See p. 396.

834. *a.* 1. *Mark ruffian Violence,* etc., from *On the Death of Robert Dundas, Esq.*

12. *Clarinda's love-poet Sylvander.* Over the name Sylvander, Burns carried on a correspondence with Mrs. Maclehose, whom he called Clarinda.

15. *gravel,* vex.

b. 5. *Leeze me on,* dear to me is. The quotation is from *The Holy Fair. gies,* gives. *mair,* more.

7. *waukens lair,* wakes learning.

8. *pangs,* crams, stuffs. *fou,* full.

9. *gill,* a pint of ale. *penny wheep,* small ale.

12. *kittle,* tickle, enliven.

33. *aboon,* above.

34. *mauna fa',* may not get.

43. *falls moralizing.* See *Epistle to a Young Friend.*

45. *lowe,* flame.

47. *rove,* roving.

50. *quantum,* quantity.

56. *Who made,* etc., from *Address to the Unco Guid.*

835. *a.* 11. *To make,* etc., from *To Dr. Blacklock.*

12. *weans,* children.

20–22. *Xenophon . . . Socrates.* In his *Memorabilia,* the Greek historian and essayist, Xenophon (born about 430, died after 357 B. C.), defends the memory of his master Socrates.

b. 27. *Thou Power Supreme,* etc., from *Winter.*

32. *lave,* remainder.

836. *a.* 6. *Auerbach's Cellar of Goethe's Faust.* Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) is the greatest name in German literature. The scene in Auerbach's Cellar is to be found near the beginning of the First Part of *Faust.*

9. *Aristophanes* (c. 450–c. 380 B. C.), the greatest of the Greek writers of comedy.

36. *We twa,* etc., from *Auld Lang Syne. paidl't,* paddled. *burn,* stream, brook.

37. *dine,* dinner-time.

38. *braid,* broad.

39. *Sin auld lang syne,* since old times.

52. *Pinnacled . . . inane,* Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound,* Act III, Sc. iv, l. 204.

b. 1. *On the brink,* etc., from Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound,* Act II, Sc. v.

10. *minnie,* mother. *deave,* pester.

SOHRAB AND RUSTRUM

840. 2. *Oxus,* the chief river of central Asia, flowing northwest into the Aral Sea.

3. *Tartar camp.* The Tartars were nomadic tribes of central Asia and southern Russia.

841. 11. *Peran-Wisa,* a chief of central Asia, in command of Afrasiab's army of various Tartar tribes.

15. *Pamere,* a plateau region of central Asia.

38. *Afrasiab,* king of the Tartars.

40. *Samarcand,* a city in Turkestan.

42. *Ader-baijan,* the northwest province of Persia.

60. *common fight,* general engagement.

82. *Seistan,* a province of southwest Afghanistan bordering on Persian territory.

85. *Persian King,* Kai Khosroo. See line 223.

842. 101. *Kara-Kul,* a district in the southern part of central Asia.

107. *Haman,* a leader of the Tartars, next to Peran-Wisa in command.

113. *Casbin,* a fortified city in the northern part of Persia.

114. *Elburz,* mountains on the northern border of Persia. *Aralian,* on the Aral Sea, in central Asia.

115. *frore,* frozen.

119. *Bokhara,* a large district in central Asia, of which Bokhara, is the capital.

120. *Khiva,* a district in the valley of the lower Oxus.

121. *Toorkmuns,* a branch of the Turkish race, living in central Asia, east of the Caspian Set.

122. *Tukas,* from northwest Persia. *Salore,* a tribe living east of the Caspian Sea.

123. *Attruck,* a river in northern Persia.

128. *Ferghana,* a district in Turkestan.

129. *Jaxartes,* an ancient name of the Sir-Daria River, which flows northwest through Turkestan into the Aral Sea.

131. *Kipchak,* a district in central Asia.

132. *Kalmucks,* Mongolian nomads dwelling in western Siberia.

Kuzzaks, Cossacks, a warlike people in southern Russia and in various parts of Asia.

133. *Kirghizzes,* a nomadic people in northern Turkestan.

138. *Ilyats of Khorassan.* Khorassan is a province in northeastern Persia.

156. *corn,* grain.

160. *Cabool,* an important commercial city of northern Afghanistan.

161. *Indian Caucasus,* a range of mountains on the boundary between Turkestan and Afghanistan.

843. 217. *Iran's,* Persia's.

844. 257. *plain arms,* arms not emblazoned with devices. See line 266.

277. *Dight,* adorned, harnessed.

286. *Bahrein,* or Aval Islands, in the Persian Gulf, celebrated for their pearl-fisheries.

288. *tale,* reckoning, count.

846. 412. *Hyphasis, Hydaspes,* two rivers in northern India.

414. *wrack,* ruin.

847. 452. *autumn-star,* Sirius, the Dog Star.

497. *shore,* cut.

508. *curdled,* thickened.

848. 590. *Ader-baijan.* See l. 42.

592. *Koords,* a semi-independent people of western Persia.

596. *bruited up,* noised abroad.

849. 613. *style,* name.

851. 750. *Seistan.* See l. 82.

751. *Helmund,* a river in Seistan, in Afghanistan.

752. *Zirrah,* a lake in Seistan.

763–4. *Moorghab, Tejend, Hohik,* rivers in Turkestan.

765. *The northern Sir,* the Maxartes. See l. 129.

852. 861. *Jemshid,* a mythical king. *Persepolis,* an ancient capital of Persia.

878. *Chorasmian waste,* a region of Turkestan.

880. *Right . . . star, i.e.,* due north. *Orgunje,* a village near the delta of the Oxus.

887. *Pamere.* See l. 15.

890. *luminous home,* the Aral Sea.

THE SCHOLAR GIPSY

'There was very lately a lad in the University of Oxford who was by his poverty forced to leave his studies there and at last to join himself to a company of vagabond gipsies. Among these extravagant people, by the insinuating subtilty of his carriage, he quickly got so much of their love and esteem that they discovered to him their mystery. After he had been a pretty while exercized in the trade, there chanced to ride by a couple of scholars who had formerly been of his acquaintance. They quickly spied out their old friend among the gipsies, and he gave them an account of the necessity which drove him to that kind of life, and told them that the people he went with were not such impostors as they were taken for, but that they had a traditional kind of learning among them, and could do wonders by the power of imagination, their fancy binding that of others; that himself had learned much of their art, and when he had compassed the whole secret, he intended, he said, to leave their company, and give the world an account of what he had learned.' (Glanvil's *Vanity of Dogmatizing,* 1661.)

2. *wattled cotes,* sheep-folds.

853. 19. *corn,* grain.

31. *Glanvil's book.* See note above.

42. *erst,* formerly.

57. *Hurst,* Cumner Hurst, a hill a few miles southwest of Oxford.

58. *Berkshire,* a county south of Oxford.

59. *ingle-bench,* bench in the chimney-corner.

854. 74. *Bab-lock-hithe,* a village about four miles southwest of Oxford.

79. *Wychwood bowers,* Wychwood Forest, ten miles or so northwest from Oxford.

83. *Fyfield elm in May,* the May-pole dance at Fyfield, some six miles southwest of Oxford.

91. *Godstow Bridge,* about two miles up the Thames from Oxford.

95. *lasher pass,* mill race.

111. *Bagley Wood,* southwest of Oxford.

114. *tagged,* marked.

115. *Thessaly,* the name of the northeastern district of ancient Greece, here given to a ground near Bagley Wood.

125. *Hinksey,* a village a short distance south of Oxford.

855. 129. *Christ-Church,* a large and fashionable college in Oxford.

133. *Glanvil,* Joseph Glanvil (1636–1680), an English clergyman and writer.

147. *teen,* sorrow.

856. 208–9. *Averse . . . turn.* Dido, queen of Carthage, deserted by her lover Æneas, slew herself. When Æneas encountered her on his journey through Hades, she turned scornfully away from him.

220. *dingles,* wooded dells.

232. *Tyrian,* a city of Phenicia, anciently an important commercial center.

236. *Ægean isles,* islands of the Ægean Sea, east of Greece.

238. *Chian wine.* Chios, an island in the Ægean, was noted for its wine.

239. *tunnies,* a kind of fish.

244. *Midland waters,* Mediterranean Sea.

245. *Syrtes,* Gulf of Sidra, on northern coast of Africa.

247. *western straits,* Strait of Gibraltar.

250. *Iberians,* inhabitants of Spain and Portugal.

RUGBY CHAPEL

Written in memory of the poet's father, Dr. Thomas Arnold (1795–1842), head-master of Rugby, whose remains are interred in Rugby Chapel.

ROSSETTI: FRANCESCA DA RIMINI

Francesca da Rimini, an Italian lady of the thirteenth century, became the wife of Giovanni Malatesta. Having discovered the love between Francesca and his young brother Paolo, Giovanni killed them both. An incident in the love-story of Paolo and Francesca is put into the mouth of Francesca in Dante's *Divine Comedy, Hell,* Canto v, whence it is here rendered by Rossetti.

861. 17. *Lancelot,* the lover of Queen Guenevere, in several medieval romances.

862. 26. *A Galahalt.* Galahalt was the go-between for Lancelot and Guenevere. Hence the book that brought Paolo and Francesca together is here called 'a Galahalt.'

THE KING'S TRAGEDY

'Tradition says that Catherine Douglas, in honor of her heroic act when she barred the door with her arm against the murderers of James the First of Scots, received popularly the name of "Barlass." This name remains to her descendants, the Barlas family, in Scotland, who bear for their crest a broken arm. She married Alexander Lovell of Bolunnie.

A few stanzas from King James's lovely poem, known as *The King's Quair*, are quoted in the course of this ballad. The writer must express regret for the necessity which has compelled him to shorten the ten-syllabled lines to eight syllables, in order that they might harmonize with the ballad meter.' (Rossetti.)

The passages from *The King's Quair* quoted in the present poem are printed in italics.

James I was murdered at Perth, Feb. 20, 1437, by the Earl of Atholl and Robert Graham (Græme).

864. 8. *palm-play ball,* an old kind of tennis in which the ball was struck with the hand rather than with a racket.

25. *Bass Rock,* an islet at the entrance of the Firth of Forth.

29. *England's king,* Henry IV.

30. *long years immured.* In 1405, on his way from Scotland to France, James was captured by the English, and detained in one English prison or another until 1424.

37. *a lady,* Joan Beaufort, daughter of the Earl of Somerset. She became the wife of James in 1424.

41. *a sweeter song,* a reference to King James' poem, *The King's Quair.*

865. 45. *teen,* sorrow, grief.

48. *At Scone . . . crowned.* Scone, in Perthshire, Scotland, was the traditional scene of Scottish coronations. The coronations of James I and Joan occurred on May 21, 1424.

72. *leaguer,* siege. *Roxbro' hold,* Roxburgh Castle, on the Tweed, near the English border, besieged by James I in 1436.

106. *Three Estates,* that is, the nobility, the clergy, and the common people.

122. *Græme.* See introductory note above.

866. 157. *sea-wold,* open land on the sea.

162. *writhen,* twisted.

165. *rack,* floating mass of clouds.

176. *Duchray . . . Dhu.* The Duchray is probably the smallest stream west of Loch Lomond. A Loch Dhu is found in southwest Aberdeenshire.

179. *Inchkeith Isle,* a small island in the Firth of Forth.

181. *cerecloth,* waxed cloth, used in burial.

183. *Links of Forth,* slightly undulating land on the Firth of Forth.

192. *drouth,* thirst, lack.

867. 217. *hind,* peasant.

246. *solace and disport,* pleasure and entertainment.

251. *lift,* sky, air.

868. 305. *Windsor's castle-hold.* During the period of his detention in England, James was for a time imprisoned in Windsor Castle.

316. *Worship, ye lovers.* The lines printed in italics are adapted from King James' *The King's Quair.*

343. *blissful aventure,* happy chance.

388. *pearl-tired,* attired in pearls.

869. 414. *voidee-cup,* a drink of spiced wine served well after dinner-time and before bed time.

424. *riven and brast,* torn and broken.

430. *hurdles,* narrow boards.

440. *ingle-nook,* a corner by the fire.

442. *arrased wall,* hung with tapestries from Arras.

445. *dight,* prepared, placed.

448. *doffed,* took off.

462. *dule to dree,* sorrow to suffer.

469. *Aberdour,* north of Edinburgh, on the north shore of the Firth of Forth.

870. 532. *heft,* handle.

871. 585. *litters,* movable bed-frames.

873. 751. *requiem-knell,* the bell at requiem-mass for the dead.

MORRIS: THE EARTHLY PARADISE

The Earthly Paradise is a collection of stories related, supposedly, at fortnightly feasts alternately by the Wanderers, who are Norwegian mariners, and by certain men of a 'Western land' whose guests they have become. Twenty-four tales are eventually told in the course of the year. *Atalanta's Race* and *The Lady of the Land* are the first and eighth stories, respectively.

ATALANTA'S RACE

I

878. 1. *Arcadian woods.* Arcadia was an inland country of Peloponnesian Greece.

14. *cornel,* the tough wood of the cornel-tree.

28. *King Schœneus' town,* probably Tegea or Mantinea, these being two of the larger towns of Arcadia.

879. 63. *the fleet-foot one,* Hermes, Mercury.

79. *Diana,* patroness of hunting and woodland sports.

II

881. 51. *the sea-born one,* Venus.

65. *presently,* at once.

73. *Dryads,* wood-nymphs.

75. *Adonis' bane.* Adonis was killed by a wild boar that he had wounded.

78. *Argive cities,* cities of the Grecian state of Argolis.

91. *must,* new wine not yet fermented.

882. 142. *three-formed goddess,* Diana.

149. *framer of delights,* Venus.

168. *Artemis,* Diana.

883. 207. *sleepy garland,* poppy wreath.

210. *heading,* beheading.

III

1. *Argolis,* one of the states of Greece.

2. *the goddess,* Venus.

6. *murk,* what is left of fruit after the juice has been extracted.

8. *close,* enclosure.

884. 54. *unholpen,* unhelped.

70. *the golden age,* a fabled age of innocence and plenty.

100. *wrack,* seaweeds cast up on the shore.

885. 169. *scrip,* wallet.

IV

887. 72. *the Argive,* Milanion, whose father was king of Argolis.

V

1. *the posts,* the starting and turning posts.

5. *mighty lord,* Zeus.

6. *her,* Venus.

16. *Love's servant,* Milanion.

21. *maiden zone,* a girdle worn by maidens before marriage.

THE LADY OF THE LAND

888. 35. *law,* belief, religion.

890. 182. *poor shepherd,* Paris.

892. 310. *orb of June,* the moon.

893. 389. *Cathay,* a mediæval name for a vague region in eastern Asia.

894. 467. *wend,* go.

SWINBURNE: ATALANTA IN CALYDON

FIRST CHORUS

895. 5–8. *nightingale . . . Itylus . . . Thracian ships . . . tongueless vigil.* Philomela and Procné were daughters of Pandion, king of Attica, who gave Procné in marriage to his ally, the Thracian king Tereus. After Procné had borne a son, Itys (Itylus), Tereus concealed her in the country, that he might dishonor her sister Philomela. Having accomplished his purpose, he deprived Philomela of her tongue. By embroidering her story on a robe, however, Philomela communicated the truth to Procné, whereupon Procné killed her son and served his flesh on a dish before Tereus. When Tereus pursued the fleeing sisters, the gods granted them an escape by transforming Procné into a swallow and Philomela into a nightingale.

10. *Maiden most perfect,* Artemis.

896. 41. *Pan,* god of flocks and shepherds.

44. *Mænad,* a female worshipper of Bacchus. *Bassarid,* a Lydian or Thracian bacchanal.

THIRD CHORUS

897. 49. *Aphrodite,* Venus, goddess of love.

136, 146. *Tyro, Enipeus.* Tyro was the wife of Cretheus, beloved by the river-god Enipeus in Thessaly.

THE GARDEN OF PROSPERPINE

898. 28. *Prosperpine,* queen of the infernal regions. During the six months of the year that she passed in Olympus she was considered an amiable and propitious divinity; but during the six months in Hades she was stern and terrible. She personified the changing seasons.

HERTHA

Hertha, or Nerthus was the Germanic goddess of the earth, of fertility, and of growth.

A FORSAKEN GARDEN

The scene of this poem is East Dene, Bonchurch, Isle of Wight.

THALASSIUS

903. 15. *Oread,* a nymph of the hills.

18. *Cymothoë,* a nereid, or nymph of the sea.

37. *he,* Walter Savage Landor. See p. 657.

904. 88–9. *And gladly . . . dead.* A rendering of the epitaph written by Landor for the Spanish troops who died resisting the invasion of Napoleon:

> Emeriti lubenter quiescerimus
> Libertate parta;
> Quiescimus amissa perlubenter.

THE ROUNDEL

The roundel in Swinburne's sense is illustrated by this poem. It consists of nine complete lines arranged as follows: *a b a, b a b, a b a,* part of the first line being repeated as a refrain after the third and ninth lines. The refrain is usually so selected as to rime with the *b* lines.

THE ARMADA

Written for the three hundredth anniversary of the defeat of the Spanish Armada by the English.

907. 8. *affrayed,* frightened.

908. 28. *when Athens hurled back Asia.* A reference to the wars between the Persians and the Greeks, which began in 500 B. C. and ended about 449 B. C.

33. *the fierce July.* The Armada descended upon England in July, 1588.

34. *galleon,* a large, unwieldy vessel, usually having 3 or 4 decks. *galliass,* a large galley carrying, usually, 3 masts and some 20 guns.

39. *bastions of serpentine.* A *bastion* is a part of a fortification projecting from the main rampart. A *serpentine* is a kind of cannon.

41. *charged with bale,* laden with destruction.

46. *the Lion,* the symbol of England.

909. 63. *the helmsman's bark,* boat of Charon, in which souls were ferried across the Styx.

65. *told,* counted.

910. 110. *burgeon,* bud, sprout. *yearn,* feel desire.

124. *hurtles,* knocks violently, dashes.

133. *Python,* a huge serpent which lived on Mount Parnassus.

911. 194. *Sark,* one of the Channel Islands, off the northern coast of France. *Wight,* the Isle of Wight.

213. *England's Drake,* Sir Francis Drake, vice-admiral to Lord Howard.

912. 238. *Oquendo,* Miguel de Oquendo, the most valiant of the captains under the Spanish admiral, the Duke of Medina.

246. *Humber, Tees, Tyne, Tweed,* English rivers emptying into the North Sea.

252. *Forth,* the Firth of Forth, in Scotland.

254. *quarry,* game.

262. *ruth,* pity.

913. 264. *Shetlands and Orkneys,* groups of islands off the northern coast of Scotland.

284. *the pontiff,* the pope.
290. *fulfilled,* filled full.
292. *guerdon,* reward.
301. *Sixtus,* Sixtus V, Pope 1585–90.
302. *Philip,* Philip II, King of Spain 1556–98.
914. 309. *rede is read,* doom is assigned.

COR CORDIUM

Cor cordium, 'Heart of Hearts,'— the words on Shelley's tomb in Rome.

NON DOLET

4. *the Roman wife.* 'Pætus Cæcina was ordered by the Emperor Claudius to take his own life; and when he hesitated, his wife Arria stabbed herself, crying, "Pæte, non dolet" (Pætus, it does not hurt).' (Beatty.)

ON THE DEATHS OF THOMAS CARLYLE AND GEORGE ELIOT

Carlyle and George Eliot died in the same year, 1881.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

9–10. These two lines are quoted from Marlowe's *Tamburlaine,* Part I, Act v, Scene 1.

PATER: STYLE

916. *b. 7. Bacon.* See above, p. 187.
8. *Livy,* Titus Livius (59 B. C.–17 A. D.), greatest of the Roman historians. *Carlyle.* See p. 714.
9. *Cicero,* Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 B. C.–43 B. C.), the celebrated orator, philosopher, and statesman. *Newman.* See p. 702.
10. *Plato* (429 or 427–347 B. C.), a famous Greek philosopher. *Michelet,* Jules Michelet (1798–1874), French historian and man of letters. *Sir Thomas Browne.* See p. 200.
12. *Milton.* See p. 236. *Taylor.* See p. 221.
917. *a. 7. Lycidas.* See p. 240.
15. *Dryden.* See p. 266.
46. *dichotomy,* a division into two parts.
48. *De Quincey.* See p. 683.
b. 17. Pascal, Blaise Pascal (1623–1662), French mathematician, philosopher, and man of letters.
56. *Gibbon.* See p. 453.
918. *a. 1. Tacitus,* Cornelius Tacitus (c. 55–after 117), an eminent Roman historian and orator.
919. *a. 31. neology,* innovation in language.
b. 4. le cuistre, the pedantic fellow.
31. *Johnson.* See p. 405.
920. *a. 51. Montaigne,* Michel Eyquem de Montaigne (1533–1592), a famous French essayist.
b. 6. ascêsis, a transliteration of a Greek word meaning 'exercise, training, art.'
25. *Esmond,* a historical novel, *Henry Esmond,* by William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–1863).
26. *Newman's Idea of a University.* See p. 703.
41. *Schiller,* Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller (1759–1805), a celebrated German poet, dramatist, and historian.
921. *a. 6. Flaubert's Madame Bovary,* a novel by the French man of letters, Gustave Flaubert (1821–1880).
8. *Stendhal's Le Rouge et Le Noir,* a novel by Marie Henri Beyle (1783–1842), best known by his pseudonym 'De Stendhal.'
36. *Michelangelo,* Michelagnolo Buonarroti (1475–1564), a famous Italian sculptor, painter, architect, and poet.
b. 47. Dean Mansel, Henry Longueville Mansel (1820–1871), dean of St. Paul's, an English metaphysician.
922. *b. 30. ante-penultimate,* immediately preceding that one of a series which is next to the last one.
55. *Blake.* See p. 485.
923. *a. 36. Swedenborg,* Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), a Swedish philosopher and theosophist. *Tracts of the Times,* a series of 90 pamphlets published at Oxford from 1833–1841, to which Newman, Pusey, and others contributed. See p. 702.
b. 29–39. series of letters. . . . Madame X. Flaubert's letters to Madame X., in which he so often disparages human love and exalts the love of art, were written during the latter half of the year 1846. *Madame X.* was Madame Colet.
924. *a. 55. a sympathetic commentator,* Guy de Maupassant, who wrote an introduction to *Lettres de Gustave Flaubert à George Sand.* The passage here quoted will be found in the edition of Paris, 1884, pp. lxii–lxv.
b. 48. Blake's rapturous design. See p. 485.
925. *b. 2. ennuis,* wearinesses, vexations.
37. *Buffon,* the Comte de Buffon (1707–1788), a celebrated French naturalist. Especially known to literary criticism for his *Discours sur le style* (1853).
926. *a. 41. Scott's facility.* See p. 579.
b. 13. Les Misérables, a famous novel by Victor Marie Hugo (1802–1885).
44. *Raphael,* Raphael Santi (1483–1520), a famous Italian painter.
927. *a. 8. Flaubert's commentator,* Guy de Maupassant. See *Lettres de Gustave Flaubert à George Sand,* Paris, 1884, pp. lxi–lxii.
32. *Bach,* Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750), one of the greatest of German musicians.
b. 22. The Divine Comedy, the greatest work of the greatest of Italian poets, Dante Alighieri (1265–1321).

STEVENSON: THE FOREIGNER AT HOME

929. *a. 4. biggin',* building.
17. *Black Country.* In the English Midlands.
Moor of Rannoch. In Perthshire.
b. 22. Miss Bird. Isabella L. Bird, authoress of a popular book of travel, *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan.*
930. *a. 35. plausible,* pleasing, acceptable.
52. *roundly,* plainly, flatly.
53. *a Scottish legal body.* The Society of Scottish Advocates, whose examinations Stevenson passed at his father's request, though he never practiced law. See his *Apology for Idlers.*
b. 27. bickering, flushing, quivering.

931. *a.* 9. *harled,* rough-cast with lime mingled with small gravel.

b. 5. *commerce,* conversation, intercourse.

10. *counters,* remarks that mean nothing, not true coin.

25. *Give him the wages of going on.* A reminiscence of Tennyson's poem entitled *Wages,* in which the poet says of Virtue, 'Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.'

932. *a.* 37. *Byron* did actually discuss theology on his way to take part in the Greek war of independence. As to his descent and schooldays, see the biographical sketch on p. 586.

b. 3. *proctors,* officers who supervise the behavior of students at Oxford and Cambridge.

18. *rotten borough.* The constituencies which before the Reform Act were in the gift of great patrons were so-called; they were regarded as safe refuges for unknown or unpopular politicians, and some of the greatest of English statesmen made their entrance into Parliament — Gladstone for instance — in this way.

21. *raffish,* fashionable.

35. *Professor Blackie* (1809–95), a popular professor of Greek at the University of Edinburgh.

37. *umbrageous,* suspicious, shy.

933. *a.* 6. *iron skerries,* rocks projecting from the sea, hard as iron.

13. *girdle,* griddle, gridiron.

20. *Flodden* Field, where James IV of Scotland was defeated in 1513.

21. *Darien,* an attempt in 1698 to plant Scottish settlers on the Isthmus of Panama, which caused considerable loss of life and widespread disappointment.

Forty-five, the rebellion of 1745, which was crushed by the defeat of the Scotch at Culloden the following year.

24. *Wallace,* the Scottish hero who was defeated by the English at Falkirk in 1298.

25. *Bruce* defeated the English at Bannockburn in 1314; he was King of Scotland, 1306–29, and suffered many reverses.

47. *Shorter Catechism,* adopted at an Assembly of Puritan divines held at Westminster during the Commonwealth.

b. 3. *another church.* The Highlanders were, for the most part, Roman Catholics.

8. *Highland costume,* the kilt, a short plaited skirt, coming to the knees.

15. *Black Watch,* a famous Highland regiment.

43. *Ireland,* though in the 'political aggregation' of the British Empire, retains its own religion and customs.

FRANÇOIS VILLON

934. *a.* 24. *exhumed,* dug out of the grave.

b. 20. *pilloried,* exposed to public disgrace.

935. *a.* 21. *tubbed and swaddled,* washed and wrapped in baby clothes.

26. *given piously,* addicted to pious practices.

b. 24. *Notre Dame de Paris,* a novel by Victor Hugo (1831).

936. *a.* 9. *piping the eye,* pretending to cry.

54. *the red door,* the *Porte Rouge* of the previous column, 1.

b. 32. *Clough.* See p. 673.

937. *b.* 41. *cannikin clinked.* A reminiscence of Iago's drinking song, *Othello* II, iii, 71.

938. *a.* 12. *words of Mariana. Pericles* IV, vi, 173–4.

25. *Murger* (1822–61), author of *Scènes de la Vie de Bohème.*

939. *a.* 11. *Hogarth* (1697–1764), the great English caricaturist. One of his most famous series portrayed the careers of *The Industrious and the Idle Apprentice.*

b. 42. *pitch-and-toss.* 'Matching' coppers.

940. *a.* 55. *aumries,* boxes in which the offerings for the poor were kept.

b. 21. *made a demonstration against,* attempted to break into.

941. *a.* 19. *was upsides with him,* had the advantage of him.

942. *a.* 7. *pantler,* butler.

39. *extraordinary,* by torture.

b. 26. *put to the question,* tortured.

35. *of our pleasant vices. Lear* V, iii, 170–171: —

> The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
> Make instruments to plague us.

48. *Nathan's parable.* See ii Samuel xii, 3.

943. *a.* 4. *planted upright,* buried alive. See 937. *b.* 20.

22. *mortal push,* hand of death.

51. *more pecked,* pecked more full of holes.

944. *a.* 26. *present volume. Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (1882).

b. 21. *roystering,* swaggering.

945. *a.* 43. *Rabelais* (1483–1553), the great humorous writer of the French Renaissance.

51. *a work of some power.* Perhaps Albert Glatigny's *L'Illustre Brezacier,* which made some sensation in 1873. Stevenson's essay appeared first in *Cornhill,* August, 1877.

946. *a.* 23. *Béranger* (1780–1857), the most popular of French lyrical poets.

26. *Johnson.* See p. 405.

31. *fox burrowing.* Like the Spartan boy of ancient fable, who concealed under his cloak a fox he had stolen.

52. *mauvais pauvre,* wicked poor man.

53. *Victor Hugo* (1802–85), the great French poet of the century.

57. *mole-skin cap,* sometimes worn by the lower classes in England.

b. 27. *for me,* so far as I am concerned. I will not translate it.

52. *yester,* last.

A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSES

Stevenson began this collection of 'Rimes for Children' (as he once intended to call them — another rejected title was 'Penny Whistles') in 1881. They were dedicated when published in 1885 to his old nurse Alison Cunningham, the 'Cummy' of his own childhood.

HEATHER ALE

Among the curiosities of human nature, this legend claims a high place. It is needless to remind the reader that the Picts were never exterminated, and form to this day a large proportion of the folk of Scotland: occupying the eastern and the central parts, from the Firth of Forth, or perhaps the Lammermoors, upon the south, to the Ord of Caithness on the north. That the blundering guess of a dull chronicler should have inspired men with imaginary loathing for their own ancestors is already strange: that it should have begotten this wild legend seems incredible. Is it possible the chronicler's error was merely nominal? that what he told, and what the people proved themselves so ready to receive, about the Picts, was true or partly true of some anterior and perhaps Lappish savages, small of stature, black of hue, dwelling underground — possibly also the distillers of some forgotten spirit? See Mr. Campbell's *Tales of the West Highlands*. (Stevenson's own Note.)

948. 2. *long-syne,* long ago.

6. *Swound,* swoon.

8. *underground.* The ballad tells of the early race of men who dwelt in caves.

10. *feld,* fierce, dreadful.

12. *roes,* deer.

15. *dwarfish.* This ancient race was of small stature.

21. *like children's.* They were so small.

23. *Brewsters.* Brewers.

27. *curlews.* Characteristic birds of the Scottish moorlands, with a peculiarly piercing, haunting cry.

33. *fortuned,* happened.

34. *free.* Not on the road.

36. *vermin.* The despised cave-dwellers.

43. *swarthy.* It was a small dark race.

MEREDITH: LOVE IN THE VALLEY

First published in 1851; here printed in the fuller and more perfect version of 1878.

950. 24. *for,* in return for, instead of.

32. *Off a sunny border,* the sunlit edge of the cloud.

50. *bloomy,* like blossom.

951. 77. *the rose-flush drinks the rayless planet.* The rising sun absorbs the morning star in its brighter rays.

88. *Covert,* thick wood.

117. *yaffle,* the European green woodpecker, noted for its loud laugh-like note.

952. 128. *like the sun.* By her blinding beauty.

132. *wink,* flash with quick darting motion.

134. *Swarms,* quivers like a swarm of bees.

148. *blue* (sky).

152. *tiger,* striped like a tiger, or, perhaps, fierce.

154. *nutbrown tresses,* of the wheat.

156. *girdle,* of straw about the sheaf.

162. *Clipped,* cut off, or, perhaps, embraced. *violet shaded,* by the purple shadows of the setting sun. *snow,* the season has changed from autumn to winter.

165. *black print-branches,* the shadows of the branches printed black on the snow in the moon light.

JUGGLING JERRY

178. *Deepens,* lowers.

179. *of,* at.

953. 183. *in our names,* as we greeted each other.

188. *girdle . . . tresses.* See ll. 154 and 156.

193. *beamy,* with sunbeams between the showers.

200. *tears,* evoked by the vision seen before waking.

203. *dogwood,* which has red branches.

204. *whitebeam,* a tree with leaves white underneath, which are suddenly lighted up by a gust of wind.

208. *what is for heaven alone,* the secret which I wish to breathe to heaven. See ll. 201–2.

7. *One that outjuggles all.* Death.

25. *cricket,* play at cricket.

27. *bale,* a small piece of wood placed on top of the wickets, and whipped off by the wicket keeper to put the batsman 'out.'

33. *victual,* pronounced 'vittle.'

39. *session* (of Parliament).

41. *mock thunder* of the juggler's pistol.

954. 45. *professor* of juggling.

67. *bolus,* a large pill.

70. *fields,* souls or bodies.

81. *chirper,* glass.

88. *sword-trick,* by which a sword appears to be swallowed.

THE OLD CHARTIST

The Chartists were political revolutionaries, whose agitation came to a head in 1848. See first note on Carlyle's *Past and Present.* Some of them were transported on charges of sedition. The hero of the poem has returned to England after serving his sentence.

7. *transportation,* imprisonment beyond the seas.

955. 22. *his Grace's,* the Duke's.

28. *wrong note,* too high, in advance of the time.

39. *poll,* head.

56. *parson . . . bishop,* from the black-gowned parson into the bishop with his sleeves of white lawn.

65. *needle-muzzle,* sharp nose.

76. *place,* situation as a linen draper or dry goods salesman.

87. *dock.* At the police court.

FRANCE 1870

This ode was written in the hour of France's bitter humiliation by Germany, when Paris was in the hands of the enemy. Meredith regards France as the nation which brought political enlightenment and freedom to the world at the Revolution, but surrendered her ideals at the instigation of Napoleon III, whom he despises as a trickster. The Franco-Prussian war, he thinks, did France a service by showing her the hollowness of the pretensions of her sham-hero, and by recalling her to the path of light and freedom from which she had been beguiled by the Emperor's dreams of military glory. France is treated throughout under the

similitude of the mythological Prometheus, who brought fire from heaven for the service of man, and was punished by Zeus by being chained on a rock with a vulture perpetually tearing his vitals: being immortal, he suffered unending agony, although the bringer of light and fire — the foundation of all the arts — to men. He is first mentioned by name in l. 270.

11. *when our time was dark.* Before the Revolution of 1788.

12. *fetters,* of feudal serfdom. *spark,* of freedom.

24. *Angel and Wanton.* Half an angel of light, and half sunk in vice. The state of private and public morality under Napoleon III was low.

31. *riven,* split by lightning.

37–8. *the lurid hosts who . . . irreparable mischance.* The Fallen-Angels in Milton's *Paradise Lost.*

45. *fire from heaven.* Here the Prometheus metaphor begins.

48. *Mother of Pride.* The past is contrasted with the present, which is pictured in the words that follow.

51. *Heroes, bondsmen.* The contrast continued.

56. *crown with bays.* The King of Prussia was made Emperor of Germany in the Palace of Versailles, on the outskirts of Paris.

957. 64. *Tranced circumambient.* The world is imaged as a circle of spectators, struck dumb with astonishment.

65. *Beaks.* As the vulture tore the entrails of Prometheus with its beak.

72. *Chamber* (gives answer) to chamber.

sequent, logical, reasoning.

74. *vaults* (of the brain).

84. *long,* long ago.

100. *pinnacled Alp.* A reference to the crossing of the Alps by Napoleon I, a feat up to that time thought impossible.

106. *along the snows.* Napoleon I's retreat from Moscow.

112. *oriflamme,* the banner of ancient France, which gave place to the imperial eagle under Napoleon I.

113. *forgets,* how they sucked, etc. (l. 110), during the wars of Napoleon I. Earth covers the slain with the green grass, but the gods do not forget; they punish after the lapse of many years.

120. *They,* the gods.

133. *Immortal.* Again the Prometheus metaphor.

958. 136. *Unsparing.* The gods are merciless as were the children of France in their hour of triumph over Europe under Napoleon I.

140. *perishable,* material, the vine and grain of l. 138. *imperishable,* spiritual.

153. *worm,* grave.

161. *their,* the gods'.

171. *fables of her priests.* Napoleon III had the support of the Roman Catholic clergy, who, when the tide of battle went against France, prayed for a special intervention of Providence.

182. *In peril of,* at the risk of losing.

190. *a forfeit blade.* Meredith changed this afterwards to 'a broken blade.' His point is that France was defeated because of the insufficiency of her military organization, which, under the laxity and corruption of the administration of Napoleon III, had been allowed to fall into decay.

194. *Clamored of treachery.* At the surrender of Sedan, which was the turning point of the war, there were outcries that France had been betrayed to the Germans by her leaders.

204. *her Dishonorer,* Napoleon III.

206. *Bellona and Bacchante,* the goddesses of War and Bacchic Frenzy.

207. *Schoolmen of the North,* the Germans, who planned the campaign scientifically long before it began.

959. 210. *faithful to himself,* to the law of strength. See ll. 161–170.

215. *A name of terror.* Napoleon III was much dreaded in Europe, but was suffering from severe illness, and showed a lack of self-control at critical moments.

216. *trickster.* Napoleon III.

217. *for dominion.* Napoleon had gained military successes and territory in previous wars. *to patch a throne.* The war against Germany was said to be undertaken to divert the public attention from internal misgovernment and secure the succession of Napoleon III's son, the Prince Imperial.

220. *for their sake, i.e.,* in a righteous cause.

221. *divine,* and therefore immortal.

228. *her own* (line). *That,* so that.

229. *cease,* die.

231. *burn . . . Whatso.* Destroy her charms with a resolute heart, which is left unconsumed.

234. *from prone,* from the position of humiliation, to which she has been stricken down.

236. *His,* Ambition's.

237. Shown by her taskmasters (the Germans) to be the retribution for her misdeeds in the past.

252. *The Man.* Prometheus.

284. *prototype.* Prometheus, the light-bringer. See l. 251.

960. 302. *ghost,* spirit.

322. *the undying Ones.* The gods, or eternal principles of right.

334. *counter-changing,* interchanging, checkered.

335. *meridional,* of the sun at noon.

341. *in fee,* in lordship, placing them under an everlasting obligation.

343. *aureole,* crown of glory.

THE LARK ASCENDING

Cf. Wordsworth (p. 531) and Shelley *To a Sky Lark* (p. 627). The different ways in which the subject is treated by the three poets should not be overlooked.

13. *quick o' the ear,* inmost nerve of the ear.

14. *her,* the brain.

16. *dry* (referring to springs) unresponsive. *he,* the lark.

961. 44. *argentine,* silvery.

46. *choric,* dancing in the wind.

48. *shivers wet.* In a storm of wind and rain.

49. *chime* (of a waterfall).

56. *him,* the lark.

64. The sentence here ended runs on continuously

from the beginning of the poem, like the lark's song.

75. *fallows,* fields lying fallow.

101–124. In associating the lark's song with human intellectual activities, Meredith strikes a characteristic note, different from that of the older poets of the nineteenth century.

110. *Earth.* See biographical sketch, p. 949.

THE WOODS OF WESTERMAIN

This is more difficult than the preceding poems, and had perhaps better not be attempted by students who have not attained some mastery of Meredith's habits of thought and modes of expression. It will, however, repay study, for it sets forth the poet's attitude towards Nature and Life somewhat fully. Wordsworth's belief that 'Nature never did betray the heart that loved Her' is made by Meredith the foundation of a wide-reaching philosophy. To trust and follow Nature, to keep close to the Earth, and yet to maintain a firm hold on the senses, to control self, and to follow the highest development of humanity — this is for Meredith the secret of happiness.

The first three stanzas are similar in structure, the first part in each indicating the consequences of an attitude of trustfulness towards Nature, the second part the consequences of an attitude of distrust. Both these attitudes are represented by the same formula, used in different senses in the first two and last two lines. At the beginning of each stanza, the poet says: 'You may enter the enchanted woods safely, if you do so trustingly;' at the end, 'If you enter distrustfully, you do so at your own risk.' The fourth stanza passes into a general discussion of the conduct of life, considered allegorically under the similitude of a wood.

5–7. If you toss your heart up — you fare successfully.

8–9. But if you show a sign of fear, they change their form.

962. 15. *golden bath,* of sunlight.

17. *winnowing plumes,* fanlike wings.

18. *on a chuckle,* chuckling.

21. *jar,* a bird with wings mottled like those of a moth.

23. Note the change of thought.

25. *rood,* a small plot of ground, a fraction of an acre.

30–40. The wood opens in various directions, with bramble bushes, and wild strawberries, topped by the star-flower; the ground is encumbered by fallen twigs, fir cones, seed pods, mole hills, and parti-colored flint stones; here and there in the earth are to be seen the footprints of small animals that have fled in fear.

46. *whins,* low shrubs.

47. *minikins,* small birds.

51. *flowing not from purse,* not dependent upon the power of money.

58. If you desire it with all your soul.

59. *t' the lyre,* to the poet.

62. *Granaries,* treasures.

65. Not enslaved to worldly appetites.

66–73. In the place too often usurped by mere worldly success, you will enthrone the joy evoked by such natural beauties as a brook or a waterfall, or a clearing in the wood, where the light shines through, and the deer pass, stately and magnificent as the knights of old.

74–81. Or the dull eyes of cattle chewing the cud may take your mind back to the primeval ages, before mind was developed, when Earth was mere rocks and slime, and the sky was a place for ungainly winged creatures — the pterodactyls.

84. *The Nurse of seed.* The principle of reproduction.

88–91. If you follow Nature, you will embrace closely her glory narrowed down to beauty, or take in arms spread wide as air her beauty enlarged to magnificence.

92. *white Foam-born,* Venus, the goddess of Love.

94. *Phœbus,* Apollo, the god of song. *Phœbe,* Diana the huntress, goddess of chastity.

95. *Pan,* the god of untamed Nature.

97. *her,* Nature.

98. *sterner worship,* of modern science, which regards them not as deities but as natural forces.

99. *her,* Nature's.

103. *awn,* the delicate silky growth that terminates the grain-sheath of barley, oats, etc.

104. *Argent,* silvery. The moon is imaged as Diana the huntress.

105. *the blush,* of sunrise.

107. Passing, and eternally recurring.

110. *opposing grandeurs,* as of moonlight and sunrise. The spirit of beauty saves their glory from death ('fleetingness').

114–121. The divine harmony of Nature destroys no spring (fountain) of strength; it subdues, but does not slay, guiding the course of the stream, but preserving its source; it tempers the heat of young blood, but hears the heart of its wildness beat through self-restraint, like the solemn yet ardent dance of centaurs on the greensward.

122–9. If you catch the sense of Nature's harmony, it will open the way to a larger fellowship with humanity, and to a Love, instinct with passion, soaring beyond egotism, if you do not put the sensual appetites in the foreground.

963. 132–3. Womanhood, the supreme triumph of Nature, demands reverence for Nature's earlier developments.

138. *throat and thigh.* The waterfall, reflecting the rays of the sun, is pictured as a human being.

143. *Bare or veiled.* The 'courtly dames' are compared to the open waters and whispering leaves, with which they share the sincerity of Nature.

146. Part of the Nature, by which they are surrounded, and of which they are the outcome.

147. They have the surety of the tree's roots and the grace of its branches.

148–151. They reveal the treasures of their hearts, and do not conceal those of their minds, in order to flatter the pride of the tyrant, Man; for when the mind is not open to the light of day, darkness breeds trickery. Of woman's wiles when oppressed and their consequences, strange and terrible stories are told.

154. *the ancient battle,* between the sexes.

155. *astonished friends,* man and woman, aston-

fished at the charm of the new relation of friendship.

158. *the tiger,* man. *the snake,* woman.

162–165. Now the woman leads the man in a silken leash, decked with wild flowers, and unconscious of the constraint, though feeling its sweetness.

166–169. Love ennobles the senses, and develops individuality.

172. The dots indicate the change of thought.

181. *Gaps,* rends.

185. *fell,* savage, dreadful.

187. *Fellowly,* in the spirit of comradeship.

189. *cocks of day,* harbingers of dawn.

191. *quern,* mill.

199. *thought and felt,* what is thought and what is felt.

200–1. Nature flows on, ever-changing, like the brook, not foolishly standing still in established customs, like a stagnant pool.

209. *them you quit,* the fellow mortals you leave behind.

210–211. The most soaring spirit gains by contact with common humanity.

215–16. The sense of superiority to one's fellows is always dangerous.

218. Again the thought changes.

220. *Dragon-fowl,* of selfishness. See l. 243.

226–7. No force, not even that of egotism, is destroyed, but is controlled and turned to noble uses.

235–8. Nothing in nature is philosophically wise, least of all man, except when long experience has freed his mind from egotism.

239. *him.* The dragon of selfishness.

dumb, with astonishment. Beware of self-esteem, even when you seem to be drinking in wisdom.

964. 241. *she,* wisdom. When you feel that you only are wise, then above all beware.

244. *late* in the history of the race.

250. *Maw,* stomach, material desires.

251. Shrewd only for his own material interests.

256. *within.* See l. 251.

257. Like the pine, soft within, but obdurate to all outside himself.

265–7. Out of sight of heaven, to the very heart of Earth, the source of her activity and the spring of progress.

270–287. Humanity is imagined as a crowd gazing on the source of Nature, and discovering in the history of the race the slow beginnings of human sensibility. In all these beginnings are described the efforts of man to demand of Nature the satisfaction of material and selfish desires. But Nature cares nothing for the individual, and gives no sign in answer to the cravings of egotism. She proceeds with her task of developing the human spirit out of sensual desires.

292–305. Regarded merely from the physical side, the history of the race appears only a constant interchange of beginnings and endings, darkness and light, life and death, youth and age; but regarded spiritually, beyond the mere senses, Nature is seen to be permanent.

306–9. We may regard Nature with loathing, gazing on the dust in the tomb, or with love, keeping in mind the spiritual sense of living men

312–3. Yield to the sensual appetites, or, like Nature, give yourself to service.

321. *Airing,* opening.

323. *seer,* the prophet or beholder of Nature.

324. *witch,* bewitch, play the witch, charming you with external beauty.

329. *her awful tremble.* What is dreadful in Nature, as well as what appears beneficent.

330. *Fount.* The source of Nature. See ll. 266–7.

346–9. Not the pleasures of sense, which, wantonly followed, grow into habits, and like hags, ride the souls of men to destruction.

350–1. Pleasures that keep the senses under the control of the intellect.

352. *sequent birth.* Body, mind, and spirit developed in orderly succession.

356–363. 'It is fatal to neglect either blood, or brain, or soul. If we part company with any one of these three we shall be wrecked. The attempt to develop soul without blood, or worse still, without brain, is to court certain disaster, of which the chronicles of religion are full. The athletic craze for training the blood alone, is no better; and if the brain of the mere intellectual be a higher development, it is not in itself perfect, or satisfying, or secure.' (G. M. Trevelyan.)

965. 363. *Glassing her,* mirroring Earth or Nature.

370. *Eglantine,* the wild-rose.

371. *darkness.* Dark eglantine in thought most beautiful.

372. *Knowing,* who know.

373. *kin o' the rose.* Short-lived, but beautiful while it lasts.

374. Those who have explored the depths of Nature use life as a tool or weapon.

379. If they ask the secret of life, the answer is the same as the question 'Why?' With this answer they are content. See l. 369.

380. *ramped,* held in check. Selfishness being subdued, they will thrill to be marked for service.

384–5. So that in the hour of death, where fear sits, they will still see the stream of life flowing on.

386. *lynx.* Eyeing it without fear. *her,* Nature.

388. *Sphinx.* Riddle.

396. *lop,* trim, keep within bounds.

418. *Momently,* for a moment.

430. *at the paths behind,* at the past history of the race.

441. Again the note of warning.

446–452. If with the sons of selfishness you fear all that is outside of your personal interests. All these are conditional clauses, dependent on l. 453.

455. *Nighted,* descending by night, like a vulture.

457. *One whose eyes are out.* Ignorance.

463. *yapping,* barking.

466. *drums the sconce,* confuses the intelligence.

467. *nibblenips,* pinches, torments.

469. *demon-growing girl,* the girl being transformed into a demon.

479. *yell you Where,* yell to you where you are.

MODERN LOVE

This beautiful series of sixteen line stanzas in its entirety tells the tragedy of an ill-assorted pair. In the first here given, the husband looks back to an evening before the shipwreck of their love. The second describes a meeting by the sea after a hollow though well-meant reconciliation. The third commemorates a moment of peaceful companionship. The last analyses the causes of their failure, and contrasts the immense forces of passion with their pitiful outcome when not wisely guided and controlled.

INDEX OF AUTHORS

AUTHORS	NOTES PAGE	TEXT PAGE
"A. E." (George Russell)		1006
Arnold, Matthew	cliv	823
Barnes, William	cxxxii	667
Beddoes, Thomas Lovell		667
Belloc, Hilaire		1006
Binyon, Laurence		1012
Bridges, Robert		994
Brooke, Rupert		1009, 1012
Browning, Elizabeth Barrett	cxxxii	670
Browning, Robert	cxlv	785
Burghclere, Lord		1013
Butler, Samuel		970
Byron, George Noel Gordon, Lord	cxxvi	586
Calverley, Charles Stuart		678
Campbell, Thomas	cxxxvi	659
Carlyle, Thomas	cxxxvii	714
Chesterton, Gilbert K.		989, 1013
Clough, Arthur Hugh		673
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor	cxviii	673
Conrad, Joseph		978
Crewe, Lord		1014
Davidson, John		996
De La Mare, Walter		1007, 1014
De Quincey, Thomas	cxxxii	683
Dobell, Sidney	cxxxii	677
Dobson, Austin	cxxxii	679
Drinkwater, John		1014
Fitzgerald, Edward	cxxxii	669
Galsworthy, John		987
Gibson, W. W.		1014
Gillespie, Violet		1015
Goddard, Gregg		1015
Grenfell, Julian		1015
Griffiths, Nora		1016
Hamilton, Cicely		1016
Henley, William Ernest		995
Hewlett, Maurice		1016
Hood, Thomas		662
Hopwood, Ronald A.		1017
Housman, Alfred Edward		1000
Hunt, Leigh		660
Huxley, Thomas Henry		967
Jenkins, Elinor		1018
Keats, John	cxxx	639
Keble, John	cxxxi	661
Kipling, Rudyard		1002
Lamb, Charles	cxxii	567
Landor, Walter Savage	cxxxi	657
Ledwidge, Francis		1011
Letts, Winifred M.		1018
Locker-Lampson, Frederick		675
Macaulay, Rose		1019
Macaulay, Thomas Babington	cxxxv	691
Masefield, John	1008	1019
Meredith, George	clxi	949
Meynell, Alice		994
Moore, George		974
Moore, Thomas	cxxxi	659
Morris, William	clvii	877
Newbolt, Henry, Sir		1001
Newman, John Henry, Card.	cxxxvii	702
Noyes, Alfred		1019
Ogilvie, Will H.		1021
O. M.		1021
O'Shaughnessy, Arthur		682
Pater, Walter Horatio	clix	916
Patmore, Coventry		676
Peacock, Thomas Love		660
Phillips, Stephen		1022
Pope, Jessie		1022
Praed, Winthrop Mackworth	cxxxi	664
Rossetti, Christina		677
Rossetti, Dante Gabriel	clvi	859
Ruskin, John	cxli	733
Scott, Walter, Sir	cxxvi	579
Shaw, George Bernard		976
Shelley, Percy Bysshe	cxxix	614
Sidgwick, Frank		1022
Sorley, Charles Hamilton		1023
Southey, Robert	cxxxi	656
Stevenson, Robert Louis	clix	928
Stuart, Andrew John		1023
Swinburne, Algernon Charles	clviii	895
Taylor, Frank		1008

AUTHORS	NOTES PAGE	TEXT PAGE
Tennyson, Alfred, Lord	cxlii	745
Thackeray, William Makepeace		672
Thompson, Francis		998
Thomson, James	cxxxii	681
Tynan, Katharine		1023
Watson, William, Sir		996
Wells, H. G.		983
Williams, Iolo Aneurin		1024
Wolfe, Charles		661
Woods, Margaret L.		1024
Wordsworth, William	cxiiiA	503
Yeats, William Butler		1005

APPENDIX

Notes
Index of Authors
Index of First Lines

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

PAGE

A baby's feet, like the seashells pink,.. 906
Ah, did you once see Shelley plain,.... 802
Ah, what avails the sceptered race,.... 657
All service ranks the same with God:.. 786
All that I know..... 800
All the hills and vales along.....1023
Along these low pleached lanes, on such a day, ... 907
Although I enter not, ... 672
And the first gray of morning filled the east, ... 840
Ariel to Miranda.—Take 637
A roundel is wrought as a ring or a star-bright sphere, ... 906
'Artemidora! Gods invisible, ... 657
A slumber did my spirit seal; 521
A sonnet is a moment's monument,.... 873
A spirit haunts the year's last hours.... 746
As ships, becalmed at eve, that lay.... 673
As there I left the road in May,..... 667
As two whose love, first foolish, widening scope, ... 875
At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay, ... 781
A trouble not of clouds, or weeping rain, 541
At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time 822
A year hence may the grass that waves. 1024

Bards of Passion and of Mirth, ... 645
Before one drop of angry blood was shed 1016
Before the throne the spirits of the slain 1018
Behold her, single in the field, ... 530
Behold, within the leafy shade, ... 527
Borgia, thou once wert almost too august 658
Break, break, break, ... 767
Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art 655
But do not let us quarrel any more,.... 802

Christ God who savest man, save most.. 787
Coldly, sadly descends 857
Come, dear children, let us away, ... 837
Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet 't is early morn: 763
Crowned, girdled, garbed, and shod with light and fire, ... 915

Dark, dark lay the drifters against the red West, ...1020

PAGE

Dear and great Angel, wouldst thou only leave 806
Dear child of nature, let them rail!..... 530
Dear love, they say thou art at rest....1015
Deep in the shady sadness of a vale.... 649
Deep on the convent-roof the snows... 757
Does the road wind up-hill all the way? 678
'Do you remember me? or are you proud?' 658
Drake he 's in his hammock an' a thousand mile away, ...1001

Earth has not anything to show more fair: 538
Eat thou and drink; to-morrow thou shalt die 875
England, mother born of seamen, daughter fostered of the sea, ... 907
Enter these enchanted woods, ... 961
Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!.... 586

Fair Star of evening, Splendor of the west, ... 538
Farewell to one now silenced quite,.... 994
Fear death? to feel the fog in my throat, 816
First I salute this soil of the blessed, river and rock 820
Five years have passed; five summers, with the length 518
Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,..... 759
Frail creatures are we all! To be the best 566
From Sterling Castle we had seen..... 530
From the bonny bells of heather..... 948
From the cool and dark-lipped furrows..1006

Give her but a least excuse to love me! 786
God of our fathers, known of old —....1005
Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill; 852
Gray field of Flanders, grim old battle-plain, ...1024
Grow old along with me! 813

Hail to thee, blithe spirit! 627
Has summer come without the rose,.. 682
Here in the marshland, past the battered bridge, ...1014
Here, where the world is quiet; 898
Here, where we stood together, we three men, ...1010
He rises and begins to round, ... 960

PAGE
His wage of rest at nightfall still.....1014
Homeward the long ships leap; swift-shod with joy, ...1008

I am not One who much or oft delight, 537
I am that which began; 899
I arise from dreams of thee 626
I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers, ... 626
I built my soul a lordly pleasure-house, 749
I Catherine am a Douglas born, ... 864
I could n't touch a stop and turn a screw, 996
I drew it from its china tomb;..... 679
If from the public way you turn your steps; 521
If I could trust mine own self with your fate, ... 678
If I should die, think only this of me:..1012
'If I were dead, you 'd sometimes say, Poor child!' 677
I fled him, down the nights and down the days; 998
If there be any one can take my place.. 678
If there were dreams to sell, ... 667
If thou wilt ease thine heart..... 668
If you 're Volunteer Artist or Athlete, or if you defend the Home, ...1022
I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood, ... 771
I have had playmates, I have had companions, ... 567
I know not of what we pondered..... 678
I looked and saw your eyes 864
I met a traveler from an antique land.. 616
I must down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky, ...1008
In a coign of the cliff between lowland and highland 901
In a drear-nighted December, ... 654
Inland, within a hollow vale, I stood;.. 539
In my own shire, if I was sad, ...1001
In the wake of the yellow sunset one pale star 1016
I quite forgot to put the spigot in.....1014
In Xanadu did Kubla Khan..... 565
I read, before my eyelids dropped their shade, ... 753
I said—Then, dearest, since 't is so, ... 800
I saw the spires of Oxford 1018
Is it not better at an early hour..... 658
I strove with none; for none was worth my strife, ... 659
It does not hurt. She looked along the knife 915
It happened once, some men of Italy.. 887
I thought once how Theocritus had sung 670
It is not sweet content, be sure, ... 674
It keeps eternal whisperings around.... 655
I thought of thee, my partner and my guide, ... 540

PAGE
It is a beauteous evening, calm and free, 538
It is an ancient Mariner, ... 553
It is not to be thought of that the Flood 539
It little profits that an idle king,..... 762
I traveled among unknown men, ... 520
It was a summer evening, ... 656
I wandered lonely as a cloud 531
I weep for Adonais—he is dead! 629
I will arise and go now, and go to Innis-free, ...1005
I wonder if the old cow died or not....1014

Jenny kissed me when we met,..... 660
Just for a handful of silver he left us, 790
Just now the lilac is in bloom, ...1009

Keen, fitful gusts are whispering here and there 639

Let's contend no more, Love, ... 799
Let us begin and carry up this corpse,.. 807
Light flows our war of mocking words, and yet, ... 838
Look in my face; my name is Might-have-been; 876
Low and brown barns thatched and re-patched and tattered 1013

Many a hearth upon our dark globe sighs after many a vanished face,.... 783
Master of the murmuring courts..... 862
May Marigold is frolic, ... 994
Men say, Columbia, we shall hear thy guns 677
Mild is the parting year, and sweet.... 657
Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour: 539
Most sweet it is with unuplifted eyes.. 541
Much have I traveled in the realms of gold, ... 639
Music, when soft voices die, ... 629
My good blade carves the casques of men, ... 758
My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains 647
My heart leaps up when I behold..... 527
My spirit is too weak—mortality 655

Nay, nay, sweet England, do not grieve! 1014
Nobly, nobly, Cape Saint Vincent to the Northwest died away; 791
No, my own love of other years! 658
No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist.. 648
Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note, ... 661
Not in the crises of events, ... 676
No! those days are gone away, ... 646
Now to those who search the deep—..1020
Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room; 537

PAGE

O blithe New-comer! I have heard,.... 527
Of Heaven or Hell I have no power to sing, ... 877
Of old sat Freedom on the heights, ... 757
Oft, in the stilly night, ... 659
Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet, ...1002
O Heart of hearts, the chalice of love's fire, ... 915
Oh, Galuppi, Baldassare, this is very sad to find! 799
Oh, see how thick the goldcup flowers..1000
'Oh, sick I am to see you, will you never let me be 1000
Oh, to be in England, ... 791
Old Adam, the carrion crow, ... 669
'Old things need not be therefore true,' 674
O mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies, ... 779
Once did she hold the gorgeous east in fee; 538
On either side the river lie..... 747
One more Unfortunate, ... 662
One word is too often profaned 637
On the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hundred ninety-two 816
O saw ye not fair Ines? 662
Others abide our question. Thou art free 837
Out of the night that covers me, ... 995
Out-worn heart, in an out-worn time,..1005
O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms!.. 654
O, wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being, ... 625

Past ruined Ilion Helen lives, ... 657
Pitch here the tent, while the old horse grazes: 953
Poet who sleepest by this wandering wave! 996

Remember me when I am gone away,.. 678
Roman Virgil, thou that singest Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire, ... 783
Rough wind, that moanest loud 638
Row us out from Desenzano, to your Sirmione row! 783

Said Abner, 'At last thou art come! Ere I tell, ere thou speak, ... 791
Sailor, what of the debt we owe you?..1023
Say not the struggle nought availeth,.. 674
Seamen three! what men be ye? 660
Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, ... 649
Shadow by shadow, stripped for fight.1019
She dwelt among the untrodden ways. 520
She fell asleep on Christmas Eve:.... 860
She has dancing eyes and ruby lips, ... 676
She walks—the lady of my delight—.. 995

PAGE

She was a Phantom of delight..... 531
Shining pins that dart and click.....1022
So all day long the noise of battle rolled 759
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er, ... 585
Soldier, soldier, off to war,.....1016
Souls of Poets dead and gone, ... 646
St. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was! 640
Stand close around, ye Stygian set, ... 658
Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!.. 533
Stop, Christian passer-by! Stop, child of God, ... 566
Strange fits of passion have I known: 520
Strew on her roses, roses 856
Strong Son of God, immortal Love,.... 769
Such a starved bank of moss 818
Sunset and evening star, ... 784
Sweet dimness of her loosened hair's down-fall 874
Swiftly walk over the western wave,.. 637

Tax not the royal saint with vain expense, ... 540
That second time they hunted me 789
That's my last Duchess painted on the wall, ... 786
The awful shadow of some unseen Power 615
The blessed damozel leaned out 860
The changing guests, each in a different mood, ... 875
The day is dark and the night 863
The frost performs its secret ministry, 565
The harp that once through Tara's halls 660
The hour which might have been, yet might not be, ... 874
The Lady Poverty was fair: 995
The lost days of my life until to-day,.. 876
The Meuse and Marne have little waves; 1023
The mountain sheep are sweeter, ... 660
The naked earth is warm with Spring.1015
The night I left my father said:.....1014
The pale stars are gone! 616
The play is done—the curtain drops,.. 672
The poet in a golden clime was born,.. 746
The primrose in the sheäde do blow, .. 667
The rain had fallen, the Poet arose,.... 767
There is delight in singing, though none hear 658
There's a breathless hush in the Close tonight— 1002
There's a sea that lies uncharted far beyond the setting sun, ...1017
'There!' said a stripling, pointing with meet pride 541
There they are, my fifty men and women 808
There was a roaring in the wind all night; 528

PAGE

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream, ... 534
The sun is warm, the sky is clear, ... 616
The wind blows out of the gates of the day, ...1006
The woods decay, the woods decay and fall, ... 778
The world comes not to an end: her city hives 994
The world is too much with us: late and soon, ... 540
The world's great age begins anew.... 636
They dreamt not of a perishable home.. 541
The year's at the spring 786
Think no more, lad; laugh, be jolly:....1001
Think thou and act; to-morrow thou shalt die 875
This is the Chapel: here, my son, ...1002
This relative of mine, ... 675
Though I be now a gray, gray friar, ... 661
Thou lovely and beloved, thou my love; 874
Thou Permanence amid all things that pass! 1022
Thou shalt have one God only; who.. 674
Thou still unravished bride of quietness, 647
Three years she grew in sun and shower, 520
Through thick Arcadian woods a hunter went, ... 878
'T is the middle of night by the castle clock, ... 560
To sea, to sea! The calm is o'er;..... 668
Toussaint, the most unhappy man of men! 538
To wear out heart, and nerves, and brain, ... 675
Two souls diverse out of our human sight 915
Two Voices are there; one is of the sea, 540
Two years ago I taught him Greek, ...1021
Tyre of the farther West! be thou too warned, ... 661

Under the wide and starry sky 928
Under yonder beech-tree single on the greensward, ... 949
Upon the flowery forefront of the year, 903
Up with me! up with me into the clouds! 531

Vanguard of Liberty, ye men of Kent, 539
Very old are the woods: 1007

Wake: the silver dusk returning.....1000
Watch thou and fear; to-morrow thou shalt die 875
We are the music makers, ... 682

PAGE

Weary of myself, and sick of asking.... 840
We cannot kindle when we will 840
Welcome, old friend! These many years 658
We look for her that sunlike stood.... 956
'What are the bugles blowin' for?' said Files-on-Parade 1004
Whate'er I be, old England is my dam! 954
What have I done for you, ... 995
What was he doing, the great god Pan, 670
Wheer 'asta bean saw long and mea liggin' 'ere aloan? 779
When do I see thee most, beloved one? 874
When I am dead, my dearest, ... 677
When I am living in the midlands,.....1006
When I have borne in memory what has tamed 539
When I have fears that I may cease to be 655
When I made answer, I began: 'Alas! 861
When the lamp is shattered..... 638
When there was heard no more the war's loud sound, ...1011
When thin-strewn memory I look through, ...1007
When we fought the campaigns (in the long Christmas rains) 1019
When vain desire at last and vain regret 876
When we were girl and boy together,.. 668
Where lies the land to which the ship would go? 674
Where the quiet-colored end of evening smiles 797
Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he 533
Why, having won her, do I woo?..... 676
Wild wind, and drear, beneath the pale stars blowing, ...1015
With arrows on their quarters and with numbers on their hoofs, ...1021
With blackest moss, the flower-pots,... 745
With fingers weary and worn, ... 663
With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children, ...1012
Would that the structure brave, the manifold music I build, ... 811

Years—years ago, ere yet my dreams:.. 664
Ye mariners of England..... 659
Yes, he is gone, there is the message, see! 1013
You ask me why, though ill at ease,.... 757
You know, we French stormed Ratisbon; 788
Your ghost will walk, you lover of trees, 802
Your hands lie open in the long fresh grass, ... 874
You tell me you 're promised a lover,.. 665